

THE ADVENT

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*A Quarterly Devoted to the Exposition of
Sri Aurobindo's Vision of the Future*



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The Advent



Our Path

To walk on the path you must have a sunless intrepidity, you must never turn back upon yourself with this mean, petty, weak, ugly movement that fear is.

An insomitable courage, a perfect sincerity, a total self-giving to the extent that you do not calculate or bargain, you do not give with the idea of receiving, you do not offer yourself with the intention of being protected, you do not have a faith that needs proofs, - this is indispensable for advancing on the path, - this alone can shelter you against all dangers.

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CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
EDITORIALS	
— <i>Nolini Kanta Gupta</i> ..	5
LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO	
— <i>Sri Aurobindo</i> ..	11
SRI AUROBINDO LITERATURE (IX)	
— <i>M. P. Pandit</i> ..	17
SRI AUROBINDO AND THE NEW AGE	
— <i>Rishabhchand</i> ..	22
RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY	
— <i>K. C. Varadachari</i> ..	35
THE TEACHINGS OF THE MOTHER (x)	
— <i>Rishabhchand</i> ..	48
THE LIFE DIVINE (An Outline)	
— <i>N. Pearson</i> ..	57
THE WORD OF THE SILENCE	
— <i>M. V. Seetaraman</i> ..	74
REVIEWS :	
INTEGRAL PHILOSOPHY OF	
SRI AUROBINDO	
— <i>N. Das Gupta</i> ..	85
KRISHNOLLASA	
— <i>I.K. Roy</i> ..	91

Man can accept his fate, he can refuse.

SRI AUROBINDO



THE ADVENT

The Divine gives itself to those who give themselves without reserve and in all their parts to the Divine. For them the calm, the light, the power, the bliss, the freedom, the wideness, the heights of knowledge, the seas of Ananda. - - - Sri Aurobindo.

EDITORIALS*

MOTHER'S COMMENTARY

ON THE

DHAMMAPADA

Just as the rains pierce through the bad roofing of a house, even so the passions pierce through an ill-disciplined mind.

THERE are innumerable small Buddhist sects of all kinds, in China, in Japan, in Burma and each one follows its own methods, but the most wide-spread among them all are those whose sole practice is to make the mind quiet.

They sit down for a few hours in the day and even at night and quiet their mind. This is for them the key to all realisation

* Based on the Mother's Talks.

—a quiet mind, a mind that knows how to keep quiet for hours together without roving. You must not believe however that it is a very easy thing to do, but they have no other object. They do not concentrate upon any thought, they do not try to understand better, to know more, nothing of the kind, for them the only way is to have a quiet mind and at times they pass through years and years of effort before they arrive at this result—to silence the mind, to keep it absolutely still and immobile; for, as it is said here in the Dhammapada, if the mind is undisciplined, then this constant movement of ideas following one another, sometimes without any order, ideas contradicting and opposing each other, ideas that speculate on things, all that jostles about in the head, makes some kind of holes in the roof, as it were. So through these holes all undesirable movements enter into the consciousness, as water enters into a house having a leaky roof.

Whatever that may be, I believe it is a practice that advises everybody to keep a certain time everyday for trying to make the mind quiet, smooth, immobile. And it is an undeniable fact that the more you are mentally developed, the quicker you succeed in doing the thing; and the more the mind is in a rudimentary state, the more difficult it is.

Those who are at the bottom of the scale, who have never trained their mind find it necessary to speak in order to think. It happens even that it is the sound of their voice which enables them to associate the ideas; if they do not express themselves, they do not think. At a higher level there are those who have still to move about words in their head in order to think, even though they do not utter them loudly. Those who begin truly to think are they who are able to think without words, that is to say, to be in contact with the idea and express it through very different words and phrases. There are degrees, many higher degrees, but those who think without words begin truly to reach an intellectual state and for them it is much more easy to make the mind quiet, that is to say, to stop the movement of associating the ideas that move about like passers-by in a public place and to contemplate an idea in silence.

I emphasise this fact, because there are not a few people

who, when a mental silence has been passed into them by occult ways, are immediately alarmed and apprehend loss of intelligence. Because they can no longer think, they fear they would become stupid ! But to cease thinking is an achievement higher than being able to spin out thoughts endlessly and that demands a much greater development.

So from every point of view, and not only from the spiritual point of view, it is always very good to practise silence for a few minutes, at least twice a day, but it must be a true silence, not merely abstention from talking.

Now let us try to be completely silent for a few minutes.

**

*He grieves here, he grieves hereafter. The evil-doer
grieves in both. He grieves, he suffers as he sees the
wrong in his actions.*

It is quite evident that when you act in an ugly and mean way, you are naturally unhappy ; but to be unhappy because you are conscious of the ugliness of your doings, seems to me to be already a very advanced stage, for one needs to be very conscious in order to be aware of the evil that one does, and to be conscious of the evil that one does is already a first step towards not doing it at all.

Generally, people are altogether blind to the ugliness of their own actions. They do wrong through ignorance, through unconsciousness, through smallness, through that sort of turning back on oneself which comes of unconsciousness and of ignorance, that obscure instinct of self-preservation which makes one ready to sacrifice the whole world for the sake of one's own welfare. And the smaller one is the greater the sacrifice offered to one's smallness appears natural.

One must be very much higher in the scale to see that what one does is ugly. One must have at the core of oneself a kind of fore-knowledge of what is beauty, nobility, generosity in order not to be able to bear their absence in oneself.

I think Dhammapada speaks here of those who know already what is beautiful and noble and who do evil wilfully, deliberately. For them life becomes indeed terribly painful. To do persistently what one knows should not be done, means that it is at the cost of all repose, all possible tranquillity, all well-being that one can have. He who lies is constantly restless under the fear that his falsehood may be discovered; he who has acted wrongly is in a constant anxiety at the idea that perhaps he will be punished; he who tries to deceive has no rest and fears lest it should be found out that he deceives.

In reality even for a purely egoistic reason, to do good, to be just, straight, honest is the best means to be quiet and peaceful, to reduce one's anxiety to a minimum. And besides, if one could be unselfish, disinterested without calculation and selfishness, then it would be possible to become truly happy.

You carry with you, around you, in you the atmosphere created by your actions, and if what you do is beautiful, good and harmonious, your atmosphere is beautiful, good and harmonious; on the other hand if you live in a sordid selfishness, unscrupulous self-interest, cruel bad will, it is that which you will breathe every moment of your life and that means misery, constant discomfort, it means ugliness in despair because of being ugly.

And you must not believe that by leaving the body you will free yourself of this atmosphere; on the contrary, the body is a kind of a veil of unconsciousness which diminishes the intensity of the suffering. If you are without the protection of the body in the most material vital life, the suffering becomes much more acute and you have no longer the opportunity to change what is to be changed, to correct what is to be corrected, to open yourself to a higher, happier and more luminous life and consciousness.

You must make haste to do your work here, for it is here that you can truly do it.

Expect nothing from death. Life is your salvation.

It is in life that you must transform yourself. It is upon earth that you progress and it is upon earth that you realise. It is in the body that you win the Victory.

He rejoices here, he rejoices hereafter. The righteous rejoices in both. He rejoices, he rejoices evermore as he sees the purity of his actions.

He suffers here, he suffers hereafter. In both the wrong-doer suffers. He suffers seeing he has done wrong. He suffers evermore as he goes to the evil world.

He delights here, hereafter he delights. In both the righteous delights. He delights seeing he has done right. He delights evermore as he goes to the happy world.

It would almost seem from these texts that Buddhism accepts the idea of a hell and a heaven; but that is quite a superficial way of understanding; for, in a deeper way this was not the thought of Buddha. The idea on which he always insisted is this that you create, by your conduct and the state of your consciousness, the world in which you live. Everyone carries in himself the world in which he lives and in which he will continue to live even when he loses his body, because, according to Buddha's teaching, there is, so to say, no difference between life in the body and life outside the body.

Some persons believe, some traditions teach that to come out of the body is a blessing and that all difficulties disappear, provided however you fulfil certain rites, as in some religions, and that is also why so much importance is given to the religious rites which are, as it were, a passport for going to a happier region once you have left the body. Some even imagine that as soon as you leave the body you at once leave all misery; but it is far from being true and this is what Dhammapada indicates here: the world of evil, as it has been called, consists of psychological ranges, particular states of consciousness you go into when you do a wrong thing, that is to say, when you stray away from whatever is beautiful, pure, happy and you live in ugliness and wickedness. Nothing is more discouraging than to live in an atmosphere of wickedness.

What Dhammapada says here almost in a puerile way is essentially true. Naturally it does not speak of those who think, "Oh, how good I am, how nice I am !" and so find themselves happy. That is childishness. But when you are good, when you are generous, noble, unselfish, kind, you create in you, around you an atmosphere and this atmosphere is a sort of luminous emanation. You breathe, you bloom like a flower in the sun, and no more you turn back on yourself in pain, you have no bitterness, no revolt, no misery. Spontaneously, naturally the atmosphere becomes luminous and the air you breathe is full of happiness. It is this air that you breathe, while within the body or without, in the state of waking and in the state of sleep, in life or in passing from life, outside earthly life until your new life.

All wrong act produces on the consciousness the effect of the wind that dries up, of the cold that freezes or of the burning flame that consumes.

All good and kind act brings light, restfulness, joy,—the sunshine in which flowers bloom.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO

YOU must not try to get experiences ; you are not yet ready for them : instead of the right experience something abnormal comes. You must get your vital purified and calm so that these movements may not come. Nothing abnormal like not sleeping, not eating—all that is the vital trying to do extraordinary things so as to imagine it is going fast and doing high sadhana. A pure, simple, quiet, well-balanced vital is necessary for this Yoga.

I-II-1932

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You cannot say, "I am God". One can realise that there is one Self everywhere and one can feel a close union with the Divine—that is what is meant in the Upanishads. "I am God" would mean a claim to be an avatar or Incarnation.

I-II-32

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**

Do what you sincerely yourself feel.

7-10-1932

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**

The vital always prefers to cover its movements from the Light.

11-10-1932

*
**

Be careful about vital movements and formations—when you allow them, you are on the dangerous slope.

15-10-1932

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**

If the consciousness is tied to the body, then they (physical discomforts) interfere with the yoga. If the consciousness is not so tied, it does not prevent meditation and experience in the least.

*
**

All life is the play of universal forces. The individual gives a personal form to these universal forces. But he can choose whether he shall respond or not to the action of a particular force. Only most people do not really choose—they indulge the play of the forces. Your illnesses, depressions etc. are the repeated play of such forces. It is only when one can make oneself free of them that one can be the true person and have a true life—but one can be free only by living in the Divine.

30-5-1933

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Question : Is there any significance in a sky and can one feel the sky ? I seemed to do so.

A : It is usually an image of the mental plane—the higher mental *sky*, not the ordinary mind.

26-6-1933

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There is no opposition between work and meditation in this yoga. Each has its place.

30-6-1933

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**

The individual being, Jivatman, is not an illusion. Moreover the world is full of ego and it is not got rid of by merely feeling that it does not exist.

21-12-1932

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How can you do like the Mother or do the work that she can do ? That is the ambition and vanity coming up.

5-11-1932

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**

One has to aspire to the Divine and surrender and leave it to the Divine to do what is true and right with the Adhar once it is perfected.

7-11-1932

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If you want to do yoga, you must get rid of fear. Yoga and fear do not go together.

3-1-1933

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**

Dismiss fear and don't mind.

21-1-1933

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**

It is not necessary to be in samadhi to be in contact with the Divine.

21-1-1933

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**

(*Like and dislike*)

It is no reason at all for doing or not doing things. The first principle of Yoga is to rise above it.

7-2-1933

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**

Tea is very bad for the nerves. With so much nervousness you should give it up altogether.

11-2-1933

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Do you take the Ashram food in full or thrice ? If it is, it ought to be sufficient.

13-2-1933

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(*Mixing with people, laughing, joking, playing etc.*)

That is a kind of vital expansiveness, it is not vital strength—this expansiveness is also expensive. For when there is this mixing, the vitally strong get strength from it but the vitally weak expend what strength they have and become weaker.

23-2-1933

*
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It is because you yourself are so fidgetty, nervous, divided and undecided that we are unable to make a final decision.

27-2-1933

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What you describe is what we mean by the psychic being—in its own plane of existence; for the psychic plane is like that.

The psychic stands behind the rest of the being, supporting it with its own purity, truth and joy.

9-3-1933

*
**

(‘I Pray to you fervently to establish me for ever in the true state of being and living, Mother.’)

To do that you must bring the psychic being into the front and it must influence mind, life and body consciousness and change them.

10-3-1933

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**

The more you devote yourself the more powerful it (the psychic being) will become.

11-3-1933

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[Is not what we call āmod (fun and amusement) a help to yoga?]

Not in the least. It is an inner joy and cheerfulness that helps, but this is merely a vital bubbling on the surface. It is all right in ordinary life, but in yoga it merely expends the vital force for nothing.

11-3-1933

*
**

The wrong movements belong to the universal vital Nature, but the vital of man also shares in them, makes itself a centre and field of the play of those wrong forces; in that sense they are in man. But by constant rejection they are pushed out; you feel them no longer rising in you but coming from outside. The vital still admits them, because it is not yet pure of the old

habit of response. You have to persist till they are entirely foreign to your nature and no longer get admittance.

14-3-1933

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If you bring somebody between you and the Mother, it is bound to give trouble.

5-4-1933

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**

By the sympathy you get into contact and receive what is in the other—or also you may give or let go or have drawn from you part of your force which goes to the other. It is the vital sympathy which has this effect; a calm spiritual or psychic good will does not bring these reactions.

*
**

You have to learn to live in yourself with the Mother, in contact with her consciousness, and meet others only with your exterior surface.

*
**

That is always the best thing to do. To keep quiet, open and call or wait for the descent.

*
**

It is no use trying—it comes or it does not come. One must be open for its coming, that is all.

9-4-1933

SRI AUROBINDO

SRI AUROBINDO LITERATURE (IX)

WAY OF MEDITATION

IT is possible to train the being to tune itself to the workings of the Divine Consciousness by another means, *dhyāna*.

Dhyana, commonly translated as Meditation, is of several kinds only one of which can be truly called meditation. Sri Aurobindo analyses these different forms of Dhyana into four main kinds. There is first, meditation (*manana*) which is a dwelling of the mind on a line of thought or series of ideas constituting a single subject. The mind is let go into a channel of thought activity centred around the object of meditation, which may be a Knowledge-Idea—say the Divine as omnipresent, the Divine as one's own highest Self, or the Divine as an Impersonal Power,—or the Divine as a Personal Deity with several attributes or it may be, simply a Call to the Divine. The second is contemplation, a more concentrated direction of the mental faculties on a *single* Idea or Image or object. As a result of this concentration there arises in the mind, naturally, a knowledge of the object contemplated upon. There is a third kind, the Dhyana of self-observation, in which one stands back from the running activity of thoughts and only observes the nature of his mind as shown by the thoughts. The fourth is the process by which the thoughts are steadily rejected and the mind kept more and more free from the turbidity of thoughts so as to provide a more or less empty vessel in which the Higher Consciousness may settle itself; this is the Dhyana of liberation, liberation of the mind from its mechanical and inferior movements into purer altitudes giving it the freedom to think or not to think, power to choose its thoughts or go beyond them.

Each of these forms of Dhyana has its own value in spiritual life. The individual chooses that which is most natural to him. It is also found in the course of sadhana that the same line of Dhyana

may not be suitable at all times. Different Dhyana-processes may be called for at different stages of development and one should be supple enough to use whichever method is the most helpful during the period.

The central principle of Dhyana, it will be observed, is to summon the various faculties of the being, particularly the mental energies, which are usually spread out in innumerable directions and gather them round the object of one's quest. Indeed in an ideal condition the entire being stands naturally so gathered and mobilised around the Truth of its seeking, all the time. But a long prior discipline is necessary to train the being in this direction and to accustom it to function in that poise for longer and longer periods before it settles in that position normally. And this discipline is what is called Dhyana, Meditation.

There are certain conditions which are very helpful in the beginning, external and internal. There should be, in the first place, a reasonable measure of solitude, a seclusion where one could be by himself and meditate without fear of physical intrusion or interruption by others. The next condition is that the body must be trained to take up a position that is most helpful for the purpose of meditation. That position is ideal in which the body settles into a state of gathered immobility freeing the rest of the being from the pull of the physical frame and providing for it a firm and stable base. The sitting position is the best for in that one can continue the course of meditation for longer stretches of time undistracted by restlessness or tiredness in the body. The sitting position in which the spine is kept erect, the chest, the neck and the head held up straight, is the best posture as it promotes stability and a healthy coursing of vitality in the body infusing fresh currents of life-energy in the mental and pranic organisms which are the leading participants in the meditation.

The very first difficulty one meets with the moment he begins to meditate is the rush of thoughts. Thoughts crowd in such a bewildering profusion that it looks as if there are more thoughts during meditation than at other times. But this is not quite so. The fact is normally men are so preoccupied with many other things that they are not conscious of the innumerable

thoughts floating on the surface of their mind. When one prepares for meditation the mind is focussed in a narrower circle and the flow of thoughts comes to the notice more prominently than ever. Now there are ways of countering this invasion of thoughts.

One can stand back from the wave of thoughts and observe them without however sanctioning or participating in them. There is no effort to reject or fight with them. One simply stands back as a witness. Gradually for want of support from the active mind the thoughts begin to dwindle and peter away. Another way is to treat the thoughts as coming from outside and vigilantly check them when they try to enter the mind. Each thought is to be so detected and thrown out before it comes in or after it is discovered. A third way is to treat the thoughts as foreign, as coming from Prakriti and for oneself to stand in the poise of the witness Purusha, without sanction, without approving or disapproving, aloof. This leads in time to a kind of bifurcation, a division in the mind : one part is quiet and watches, the other is the scene of crossing thoughts. It is possible afterwards to impose the quietude of the witness part on the part involved in the thought-movement. Yet another way is to ignore the movement of thoughts on the surface of the mind and to go within with a will pursuing the object of meditation. This succeeds in the measure of the interest aroused in the mind : where it has interest there the mind turns. The best method, however, is to remember and invoke the Silence and Peace that stand at the back of all thoughts and movement. Whether at the back of our mind or behind the universal movements there is a supporting Silence, a Calm, a Peace. And the sadhaka should learn to mentally envisage it, invoke it and gently lay himself open to its entry into himself. In the course of time, this Calm and Silence makes itself felt and once it enters the mind, in whatever layer, the end of the rule of thoughts is begun. It is this Silence and Peace that is to be regarded, concentrated upon, ignoring the activity of the surface mind. Sri Aurobindo points out that it is easier and more natural to let this Silence take hold of us than for us to enter into it. And as the Silence and Peace settle in the being the consciousness gets readied to receive and assimilate what comes from above or

within and opens to the reign of the Divine. The turbid contents of the human vessel—passions, desires and their reactions—are steadily replaced by a quiet joy, enlightened emotions and increasing purity.

The success of the meditation depends largely upon the sincerity and strength of the aspiration behind it. It is not duration but the intensity of the aspiring consciousness that is important. The Mother once observed that three minutes of intense aspiration is worth much more than hours of stagnant meditation. Fatigue is to be avoided at all costs : concentration loses its power and the mind jades. Sri Aurobindo advises relaxation into meditation instead of concentration in such cases.

That brings us to other difficulties usually encountered in meditation. Frequently one is overcome by sleep. However, this sleep, it must be remembered, is not the usual kind of sleep. As a result of the pressure to go within, the consciousness as it withdraws from the waking (to the external world) tends to lapse by habit into sleep. But it is only a part of it that so sinks into sleep; if there be sufficient fire of aspiration, the larger part of the consciousness is seen to be luminously active within, below or behind the layer of sleep. If the sleep were of the ordinary tamasic variety, it would not be possible for the body to hold itself for long in the erect posture of meditation.

Then there are the obstructions of forgetfulness, inertia and absorption into mechanically repetitive habits of mind; they are best negated by constant vigilance, ardour and strong will in the effort. There are also the obstacles of restlessness, impatience, over-eagerness and violence of effort which soon tire and bring in depression. These are to be eliminated and replaced by patience, persistence and a quiet aspiration.

During meditation the consciousness (not merely the outer mind which is only a segment of it) is withdrawn from its usual activity of ceaseless reception and response to external contacts and turned to its own larger expanse, whether inwards or upwards, which is more open to and in a way in contacts with the Divine Consciousness. So turned and tuned the limited human consciousness is exposed to the touches and workings of the Force

of the Higher Consciousness which prepare and precipitate its change from the lower into the higher, from the human into the divine nature. This concentration of consciousness is usually done either in the head or in the heart. When the natural inclination is to seek the Divine within oneself, the concentration is done in the heart centre (in the middle of the chest, the cardiac centre) with a strong aspiration for an opening inward and realisation of the Divinity seated deep within. When the urge is to rise in one's consciousness above the bounds of the mind or to invoke the descent of the Peace above the mind, the concentration is done in the head. Such a concentration is indeed strenuous but the strain begins to disappear as one learns to 'lift the concentration above the brain-mind'.

Thus meditation puts the being of the sadhaka in a condition of increasing and conscious receptivity to the workings of the Yoga Shakti. As it deepens there is even a total forgetfulness of the external environment and outer nature. There is a steady settling in of peace, joy, light, knowledge and other inalienable powers of the Higher Consciousness in the inner mind and being of the practicant. In most lines of Yoga this condition, experienced uninterruptedly in the hours of Samadhi—the crown of Dhyana—, is stabilised and organised into a state of liberation in the inner being to the exclusion of the rest of oneself—the external nature in its triple formulation on the mental, vital and physical levels—under the rule of Ignorance. But in the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo, care is taken to relate the inner realisation at every step with the outer nature. The ordinary consciousness which is sought to be completely stilled and immobilised into the state of samadhi in the older Patanjala Yoga, for instance, is here quieted and into that quietude brought the powers of the Higher or Deeper Consciousness to change its very nature. The condition of receptivity and illumination realised during meditation is consciously prolonged even during other hours and made the base of all movements of active life. As one progresses inly, further effort is made to communicate and dynamise in terms of life the golden gains of Meditation.

M. P. PANDIT

SRI AUROBINDO AND THE NEW AGE

CHAPTER II

THE DAWN FIRES (III)

LEONARDO DA VINCI (1452-1519)

“Lofty designs must close in like effects :
Loftily lying,
Leave him—still loftier than the world suspects,
Living and dying.” — Browning

THE real history of man is a kaleidoscope of his evolution. It is a record of the march of humanity, viewed as a single family, towards its destiny. But the march is not in a straight line—it progresses forwards and backwards, describing many a curve as it moves on. Nor do all members of the family proceed abreast of each other and at the same pace. They start from different places, take different routes, and pass through different tracts. But all are guided by the same law of evolution which, though various in its steps, is yet invariable in its cardinal principles and main objectives.

But what do we mean by evolution ? It is essentially a progressive emergence of consciousness from its original involution in its own absolute antithesis, which is inconscience. From inconscience or unconsciousness we have the upward gradient or ascending scale of the evolutes of Matter, Life and Mind, which we know, and the Supermind (Vijnana) and the infinite divine Bliss (Ananda), of which we are not aware, and to which we have not as a race yet risen. But this evolution or emergence is, as I have already said, cyclic, and not rectilinear. For, consciousness is a manifold unit, comprising numberless states and their characteristic modes of expression, a complex, developing diversity held together by

an underlying unity, and their full emergence is not possible all at once and in a linear way. From the Superconscient Spirit down to Matter, there is a regular hierarchy of the states of consciousness. Our normal human mind or mental consciousness is a twilit and bounded state on the lower grade of this hierarchy. And the expression of this consciousness in terms of life is what we vaguely call culture. But beyond and behind this frontal mental consciousness, there are deeper and higher levels or planes where consciousness is not mental, and not at all twilit and bounded. The expression of these higher planes of consciousness in terms of earthly life is the real, though hidden, sense and function of culture.

Every nation is a member of the human family, and has, in its depths, a soul or indwelling Spirit, which is an indivisible portion of the universal Spirit or Brahman. And it is the self-consciousness of this national soul that is evolving, and trying to express its individual genius in terms of life. It can, therefore, be said that the perfect self-expression of the distinctive individuality of the national soul is the end of the culture of a nation. Each culture is, then, a progressively self-deploying manifold. All cultures have their individual place, value and function in the universal economy of human evolution, primitive cultures as much as those we proudly call modern. They are symbols of the growth of human consciousness, mirrors of the unfolding collective soul. Each of them reflects the physiognomy of an occult archetype, and strives to express the inherent law (swadharma) of its own being.

But all cultures do not live for ever. They have their childhood, youth, and old age, and when decay reaches the point of decomposition, they disintegrate and die. They have offered their specific contribution to the general culture of mankind, and have no longer any reason for existing. They do not survive, because their survival will be a barren inconsequence, almost an anachronism in the age that follows. Some of these, though not surviving in their original form, are assimilated by other nascent or youthful cultures, and live on in them. Such are the cultures of Greece and Rome. A few of their essential features

have been assimilated by the Western culture, mediaeval and modern, and continue to inspire and condition its evolution in so far as the other factors of its own soul permit of it. Other idea-forces come into play and new patterns of culture evolve to suit the temper and fulfil the purpose of the new age.

But there are some cultures, which enjoy almost a perennial life and possess a continued utility. They have an intrinsic power of renewing themselves after each decay—their winter is followed by a fresh spring. They are endowed with qualities which form the basic elements of human progress, and are intimately related to the abiding principles of evolution itself. Their survival assures the health and well-being of the general culture of the human race. They are the unfailing healers and helpers of humanity. But for them, the march of humanity would degenerate into an aimless drift and a futile dissipation. They inspire the contrite return of the prodigal nations, they point the way to the goal of human evolution, and urge the indolent stragglers to press forward. They are a beacon to the rest of mankind. For, there are certain basic values of human life which no nation, however advanced in material civilisation, can ignore or disregard for long with impunity. And it is the special mission of these perennial cultures to call attention to these values.

In such cultures of creative vision and self-renewing vitality, every crisis of their evolution is marked by the advent of a pioneer soul or prophet, who embodies the revealing message and the delivering force of the new age, springing out of the crisis. He comes as the epitome at once of all that was best in the past and all that is fundamental to the future. He resumes in himself the past achievements and foreshadows the contours of the future attempts. But what he embodies and inspires is not accomplished in full in the age he helps to shape. Often enough, it is not even rightly grasped. Many factors of a conflicting nature intervene to dilute and pervert his message and cut across his influence. Interlopers from the past or the present, unbidden and undesirable elements, steal in to vitiate the full and unalloyed development of the future. But this need not always happen. History need not always repeat itself. A time may come, will, let us hope, inevitably

come in the course of evolution, when at least a small nucleus of human society will be formed with the pure and original elements of the new age, protected by their own invincible power against all dwarfing and distorting factors, either of the past or of the present. But that is still in the womb of time. What history calls a new age or a new epoch has always been a sort of a half-new, half-old age, having a dominant vitalising core of the original stuff mixed with much that is clogging and corrupting, or at least much that acts as a force of deflection and distraction. And such was the Renaissance.

As I have said above, all crucial stages of evolution cast up one or more pioneer souls that do not so much represent the new age as embody the purest and most salient features of it. Such a pioneer soul was Lao-Tse in China, Zarathustra in Persia, Christ in Palestine, Mahammad in Arabia, Rama, Krishna, Buddha etc. in India. They do not represent the age they inaugurate, they incarnate only its kernel. But human nature has always proved incapable of assimilating the kernel in its purity. It defiles it even while professing unqualified allegiance to it. More often than not, it revolts against its exalted purity, and senses in it the presence of a force that would destroy its complacent life in the darkness. The Avatars of the Hindu conception belong to the highest grade of such pioneer souls. They are the shining landmarks of terrestrial evolution. Apart from them, most of the pioneers are what are called in Indian scriptures Vibhutis, emanations or inspired instruments of the divine Force, like Caesar, Alexander, Napoleon etc. All of them come as precursors of a new age or standard-bearers of a new ideal and order of life. They come riding the whirlwind of revolutions. But it must be clearly understood that when it is said that they are Vibhutis, embodying the kernel of a new age or a new order, it is not meant that they are all spiritual persons or morally pure and irreproachable. Many of them may even appear to be ruthless or reckless, violent and drastic in their dealings with the peoples and problems of their age. But all the same, they are made to subserve the providential purpose. They are used as instruments by a Force, which works from behind by inscrutable impulsions and sustained or sudden

inspirations. They are commissioned to deliver a message or meet an epochal challenge. They destroy or construct as the Time-spirit directs them. But whether they succeed or fail—their very failures contain the seeds of future success—they leave an indelible stamp upon the new order they initiate or shape.

Such a pioneer and pattern soul was Leonardo Da Vinci in the age of the Renaissance in Europe. Will Durant calls him “the fullest man of the Renaissance, if not of all time.”¹ Whitehead, the greatest philosopher of the twentieth century, says of him in his *Science and the Modern World*: “Perhaps the man who most completely anticipated both Bacon and the whole modern point of view was the artist Leonardo Da Vinci, who lived almost exactly a century before Bacon. Leonardo also illustrated the theory... that the rise of naturalistic art was an important ingredient in the formation of our scientific mentality. Indeed, Leonardo was more completely a man of science than was Bacon....”

The versatility of Leonardo's genius is one of the marvels of history. There is, indeed no other instance of this kind of versatility coupled with depth and integrative sensibilities in the whole range of history. Besides being a painter of the sublimest vision and subtlest execution among his contemporaries, he was a philosopher, some of whose intuitive perceptions and postulates were later confirmed and developed by Vico and Spinoza in their own ways. According to Benvenuto Cellini, Francis I, King of France, enjoyed conversation with Leonardo (Leonardo was an engaging conversationalist) and affirmed that “never has any man come into the world who knew so much...and that not only in sculpture, painting and architecture, for in addition he was a great philosopher.” But his philosophy was not a logical system of intellectual speculations—it was a corpus of loosely strung truths perceived by intuitive thought and contemplative vision. He was a poet, and a musician of admirable parts with a charming voice. It is reported, says Will Durant, that he won a musical contest in Milan and was retained at the court of the

¹ One of the earliest and most splendid in this constellation is the Florentine, Leonardo da Vinci, a man with an almost miraculous vision for reality.”—H.G. Wells.

Duke Lodovica for "the music of his voice, the charm of his conversation, the soft, sweet tone of the lyre that his hands had fashioned in the form of a horse's head." He was a mathematician of a high order, an anatomist¹, a chemist, a physicist,² an engineer, an architect and a sculptor of surpassing accomplishment, a biologist, a botanist, a mechanician³ of marvellous skill, an astronomer, a psychologist, and what not. There was hardly a department of knowledge in which his genius did not shine. He knew acoustics, optics, hydraulics, natural history, hydrostatics etc., and wrote profusely on these subjects. An idea of his versatility may be had from the letter he addressed to the Duke Lodovico :

"1) I have plans for bridges, very light and strong and suitable for carrying very easily....

2) When a place is besieged I know how to cut off water from the trenches and how to construct an infinite number of scaling ladders and other instruments....

3) I have plans for making cannon, very convenient and easy of transport, with which to hurl stones in the manner almost of hail....

4) I have plans for constructing many engines most suitable for attack or defence, and ships which can resist the fire of the heaviest cannon, and powder and smoke.

5) Also I have ways of arriving at a certain fixed spot by caverns and secret winding passages....

6) Also I can make covered cars, safe and unassailable, which will enter the serried ranks of the enemies with artillery....

7) Also I can make cannon, mortars, and light ordnance... quite different from those in common use....

8) Where it is not possible to employ cannon, I can supply catapults, mangonels, traps, and other engines of wonderful efficacy not in general use.

¹ William Hunter ranked him as the greatest anatomist of the epoch.

² Alexander von Humboldt considered him "the greatest physicist of the fifteenth century."

³ "Mechanics is the paradise of the mathematical sciences, for by its means one comes to the fruit of mathematics."—Leonardo da Vinci.

9) In time of peace I believe that I can give you as complete satisfaction as any one else in architecture, in the construction of buildings both public and private, and in conducting water from one place to another.

10) Also I can execute sculpture in marble, bronze or clay, and also painting in which my work will stand comparison with that of anyone else whoever he may be.

Moreover I would undertake the work of the bronze horse which shall endue with immortal glory and eternal honour the auspicious memory of the Prince your father and of the illustrious house of Sforza."

The above list of his attainments and capacities is staggering, indeed. But we know that he was not given to bragging, and had no exaggerated self-esteem. One proof of it is that in his copious notes, which range over almost all subjects under the sun, he hardly speaks about himself. But even this list does not exhaust his versatility. We shall presently see that his large, insatiable mind took keen interest in all subjects that came into his purview, for he knew that they were allied to one another, and interwoven in the boundless organic life of the universe. He could have chimed with Hippocratis when the latter says: "There is no point in distinguishing between things natural and things divine, for all of them are natural and all of them are divine too, whichever way we choose to look at them." He combined in himself both Plato and Aristotle in that he fused his intuitive apprehension of the truth of things into an extraordinary power of penetrating scientific observation. And the result of this combination was not only observational, but intuitive and creative knowledge. It was, in fact, a union of the vision of the artist with the trained eye of the scientist, the eye "knowing how to see." It was, indeed, a rare blend of art and science, of naturalism and supernaturalism, in the sense we use the terms today.

Though Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio had foreshadowed and formed the outline of the Renaissance, it was in Leonardo that the essential tone and temper of the new resurgence found its perfect archetype and exemplar. Leonardo, a celibate all his

life, and yet no recluse or ascetic, but living in princely comfort with pages and servants, apprentices and attendants, and dressing in silks and furs and embroidered gloves;¹ Leonardo, a contemplative, almost a mystic, who spent more time in meditating on the nature and truth of things and on the works he undertook than in actually executing those works, was "the most fascinating figure of the Renaissance." From the order of external nature, where he worked with intuitive perception and sensitive technical perfection, he would often rise to the higher domains of poetry and psychology and philosophy, and bathe in their unearthly subtlety and sublimity. "Oh, that it may please God to let me also expound the psychology of the habits of man in such fashion as I am describing his body !" He believed in God and the soul, which "can never be corrupted with the corruption of the body."

Often he would sit, absorbed, before an unfinished painting, letting his spirit voyage in the inner worlds of beauty and magnificence, and trying to capture their subtle, elusive intimations, their vagrant suggestions and pulsing gleams, so that he might give them appropriate forms and a material habitation upon his canvas. But he seldom felt perfectly satisfied with what he executed; for his conceptions were too great, too ethereally high and deep, too magically superb and evanescent to be held captive in material forms. "The artist's most important work", he says, "lies in conception rather than in execution....Men of genius do most when they work least."

This bright-eyed contemplative, this versatile scientist, this radiant Titan with the soul of a child in which love and joy and music flowed in honeyed currents of creative harmony, was an Apollo among men. Vasari² pays a glowing tribute to the uncommon loveliness of his person, "the splendour of his appearance, which was extremely beautiful and made every sorrowful soul serene." But this graceful artist was no molly-coddle. This Apollo possessed nerves of steel and the strength of an athlete. Though a vegetarian all his life, "he could bend horseshoe with

¹ Will Durant in his *Story of Civilisation*.

² Giorgio Vasari (1574) wrote short biographies of the artists of the Renaissance.

his hands." He was an expert fencer and swimmer, and skilled "in riding and managing horses which he loved as the fairest and noblest of animals." In his heart there was a harmonious union between manly courage and heroic endurance and feminine sweetness and tenderness. He would not allow hurt to any living creature. He bought caged birds in order to set them free. And yet he was a solitary of solitaires, detached and serene, rapt in the depths of his being, exploring the realms of the unseen, and endeavouring to catch in the web of his art something of the marvels of their perfection. "If you are alone, you are all your own", he writes, "with a companion you are half yourself." "The chief gift of nature is liberty."

This contemplative artist was a great lover of man and nature. Men and women, beautiful and ugly, young and old, and particularly those with pronounced peculiarities of appearance and habits, were objects of his keen observation and study. Birds and beasts, sky and sea and land, sun and moon and stars, fields and plains, rivers and mountains, winds and weather and their various moods, all interested him, as if they were parts of himself, portions of a universal organism, converging notes of a mounting symphony. He would wander through the streets of Florence, for hours on end, watching men, their faces, their carriage, their peculiar gestures and traits, and on returning home, reproduce them upon his canvas with such a wonderful accuracy and vividness as though they were still before his eyes. He would watch with loving care trees and plants and creepers, their leaves and flowers, at once with the eye of an artist and of a botanist. He would observe, entranced, the flight of birds in the sky, the sailing clouds, the running streams, the whirls and currents of water, the glistening dew on the tender grass, and sketch some of their forms, and fill hundreds of pages of his note books with the results of his observations. It is said that he wrote five thousand pages, but never completed a single book. Except some note books, teeming with sketches, observations and general remarks, nothing survives of his stupendous literary, philosophical, scientific and artistic writings. He never cared for name or fame. He wrote almost nothing about himself. It is interesting to note in this connection that he

wrote with his left hand, from right to left. If his inverted writing is put before a mirror, it becomes easily legible.

For many years he thought and worked on his cherished plan of a flying machine. He studied "parts of wings, their functions and their reactions to varied wind conditions. He stood for hours watching birds wheeling in great circles across the sky. He examined almost every species of bird manoeuvre and manner of its control."¹ He invented the helicopter, a "type of machine capable of movement upward and downward and of hovering in any given position for any required time." "He drew a model complete with a spiral wheel."² "I say," he noted, "that if this instrument made with a helix is well constructed, that is to say, of flaxen linen, of which one has closed the pores with starch, and is turned with great speed, the said helix is able to make a screen in the air and to climb high." "Some four hundred years later, the Wright brothers almost mounted towards the sun and at last proved that Leonardo's astounding vision of man flying through the air was no mad dream."

As a painter Leonardo had no equal among his contemporaries. And the secret of his singular achievement was a happy blend of intuitive vision and a monistic naturalism. His vision carried him to the "transcendent heights of Christian imagery", as Giorgio De Santillana puts it, and his naturalism—it was an intuitively perceptive and unitarian naturalism, equipped with a meticulous and flawless technique—that assured the perfection of a form in which the imagery could be appropriately embodied. "The painter must be all-embracing", he writes. "O thou artist, may thy variety be even as infinite as the phenomena of Nature. Carrying on that which God has begun, strive to multiply not the works of man's hands, but the eternal creations of God. Never imitate anyone. Let thy every production be like to a new phenomenon of Nature."

Leonardo painted the Last Supper with his soul's light and his heart's blood. Day and night he worked at it, doing and

¹ Leo Lerman

² Leo Lerman

redoing the details, touching and retouching the effects of light and shade, contemplating before it for hours in the hope of catching a fugitive gleam of inspiration, and considering how best to make the picture reflect something of the solemnity and sublimity of its subject. After having drawn the figures of the other apostles except that of Judas, he writes : "There are still two heads to execute—that of Christ, which I cannot hope to find on earth, and yet have not attained the power of persenting to myself in imagination with that perfection of beauty and of celestial grace proper to the Godhead incarnate; and that of Judas. I cannot imagine a form by which to render the countenance of a man who, after so many benefits received, had a heart so base as to be capable of betraying his Lord. However I will continue to make search."

His search was rewarded. He came across a face, that of a criminal, which was hideous with inhuman cruelty and fiendish treachery, and it served as the model for the face of Judas. But where to find a model for the face of Christ ? Leonardo went to discuss his problem with an artist friend of his. "Leonardo", his friend said to him, "the fault thou hast committed is one of which God alone can absolve thee. It is of a truth impossible to conceive of faces more lovely and gentle than those of St. James the Greater and St. James the Lesser. Accept thy misfortune and leave thy Christ imperfect as He is, for otherwise, when compared with the apostles he would not be their Saviour or their Master." Returning to the refectory, Leonardo gazed at his work for a long time with the intent gaze of a lover and an adorer, and then, suddenly taking up his brush, shadowed the outline of the Lord's face. The portrait was complete at long last. But what a portrait ! It was a marvel of artistic genius—Leonardo's masterpiece ! "For centuries, pilgrims worshipped before Leonardo's Last Supper, as though it were the holiest of shrines, and with it Art came of age."¹

Michelangelo was famous for the vigour and vitality of his paintings and of his sculpture, but Leonardo excelled in the delicate and subtle delineation of thoughts and feelings, in imparting to his

¹ Leo Lerman

portraits a virginal purity and innocence, a melting tone and nuance, a glow, a mellow light, and, above all, a serene harmony, which defy comparison. His Last Supper is considered the greatest painting the Renaissance art has produced, and his Mona Lisa is unsurpassed in its portrayal of a smile which is a magical combination of virginal sweetness and charm and motherly grace and solicitude. It is said that Raphael did a similar portrait, but it looked pale and flat by the side of Leonardo's. His Virgin of the Rocks is also a triumph of the Renaissance art. Regarding his drawings, Will Durant says "that many of them" are such masterpieces that we must rank Leonardo as the ablest, subtlest, profoundest draughtsman of the Renaissance." In a summary comparison between Leon Battista Alberti, a veritable Colossus, who towered above his contemporaries in versatility, and Leonardo Da Vinci, Jacob Burckhardt says in his *The Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy* : "Leonardo da Vinci was to Alberti as the finisher to the beginner, as the Master to the dilettante. The colossal outlines of Leonardo's nature can never be more than dimly and distantly conceived."

In 1517 Leonardo suffered a paralytic stroke which deadened the right side of his body. He tried hard to paint, but his benumbed fingers would not obey his will. He gave up the effort. His plan of the flying machine haunted him almost to the end of his life. He dreamt of flying, and sometimes, in a state of delirium, he would speak of flying and struggling and flying again, as if he was being weighted down by enormous boulders of stone. Then the struggle ceased and his soul resigned itself to God's Will. It found rest and peace. Worn with age and sickness, and racked by the spasms of asthma, he breathed his last in 1519—a giant among men, too great to be rated at his true worth even by his great contemporaries. What can better apply to his life than his own words : "As a day well-spent makes it sweet to sleep, so a life well-used makes it sweet to die"?

Rationalism (in the modern sense of the word), Realism, Individualism, Empiricism and scientific Naturalism, which are the gift of the Renaissance to the modern age, found in the manifold genius of Leonardo their most perfect representative. But

apart from these characteristic traits and trends of the time, apart from the distinctive ethos of the Renaissance, Leonardo possessed an intuitive insight into the harmony of the universe, the identity of microcosm with macrocosm, and the impeccable Law of Nature. He belonged to no Church, but to God, whose glory he sang in all his creations, in painting and sculpture and architecture, in music and in his literary and philosophical writings, in the sciences he cultivated, the numberless machines he sketched or invented, the prodigious experiments he made, and the works he accomplished or left unfinished. Gifted with a prolific creativeness, a mind of insatiable curiosity, a will of unflagging power, and a buoyant, inexhaustible vitality, he did not spare himself, and knew no rest or respite. He lavished upon the world all that he derived from the inner light he followed, and when his work was done, and the hour of his departure struck, he commended his soul to his Father, and closed his eyes for ever upon the world he loved, and which he had laboured all his life to enlighten and enrich.

RISHABHCHAND

RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY*

RELIGION is defined as the realization of the connection with the Divine Reality, conceived as a personality of highest value. It is a religature or connecting again with Him from whom we have strayed away. Yoga also means connecting oneself with God (from *yuj*) to connect. Thus they mean the same thing. Undoubtedly later yoga meant the disjunction from outer nature or the world or separation from it so as to be able to connect oneself with God. Even so is it with religion—it meant a giving up of the world and taking to the life of connecting oneself with God.

There are thus two stages one of disconnection (*nivṛtti*) and another of yoga, connection : a turning away from the world is the outer sign of religion, an enjoyment of the ecstasy of Union with the Divine is the inner sign of it.

The outer predominates in the objective consideration, the inner dominates in the subjective experience. The second condition can be stated to be one of mystic or indescribable union or freedom in God as the Ultimate Reality beyond which there is seen or known or in any way apprehended no other higher.

It is in this sense that the mystic vision is of the Ultimate and it is all things to one who has apprehended it or experienced it with one's soul. It is not a sensory experience however subtle and ample, nor is it the beholding of a Cosmic Ritam or Satyam, or Truth which is done by the purified mind of Reason, nor is it any comparable experience which the poets have intuited at all. Even the basic revelations of other seers (*śruti*) which we have heard cannot hope to make it a vision and experience of union for us. It is a direct plunge into reality so as to become with it entire and whole. In this sense the Divine is known as the Purusa

*Substance of a Talk given at the Sri Aurobindo International Education Centre in October, 1960.

(derived from *Puri-īśa*, the Lord of the City or body) which is ourselves.

That the soul finds itself to be a body of God, in whom the Divine enters wholly and also that the Divine is experienced to be the City of the soul, the *puri* (Divine), are indeed two forms of Mystic experience which is beyond the comprehension and logic of the lower powers of cognition open to man.

Philosophy is defined as the love of wisdom (*sophia*). Wisdom is stated to be the knowledge of Ultimate Reality, the most valuable of existing in the fullest sense of that term.

Existence is a value concept in addition to being a concept of fact. This requires elucidation : for a scientist a fact is that which he observes through his instruments of precision. It is a thing or a law which is the fixed rule availing between things or movements and so on. It is clear that these rules and laws are in themselves of no value unless they could be in a sense useful to man in his transactions with the world around him. Science grants useful knowledge about the world around man, and helps him to live in this world more fully or helps him to *exist*. Existence from being just an occurrence in space or time or a transaction of motions gets a different meaning as it involves further processes.

A metal existing, a rock existing or even a waterfall existing or a lightning process existing is different from a rat existing or a rabbit or a man or plant. Even here to exist would mean something for man as distinguished from that of an animal. Existing for is of course different from existing as. The whole world perhaps exists for man, (?) but to be the world is not to exist for man.

Reality as existence would have to be different from different levels of interpretation. Indeed there is a truth in the idealistic view that reality has degrees not of course of reality but value (or/and perfection too).

As is the notion of value, so is the notion of reality and as such we have indeed several attempts to explain reality in terms of value though scientists and others do not see that all attempts at philosophising is not to know reality as it is in itself but as they appear or come to man. A materialist scientist would explain all

reality as sensate objectivity or even insensate objectivity from the fact of getting rid of the relativistic subjectivity of sensations, from the notion of reality as objective or common to all. This of course is an abstraction from the nature of reality or such reality as falls within the range of perception by sense, useful albeit.

A biological scientist would think of all reality as governed by vital forces of growth and evolution. Indeed he will try to interpret reality even of the mechanical level in terms of biological degradation, even as all movement is explained in terms of entropy or rest. Mechanical experience and mechanical ability and creation or invention are sought to be shown to be governed by the biological somehow getting to act on matter.

If the mechanical conception of matter dominates the external aspect and sensate aspect, the biological conception of matter itself is in terms of discovering that matter (even the most elementary and rudimentary) is governed by the inner law of impulsion towards growth and modification.

A discovery of paramount importance in this lies in the fact that biological persistence of any living creation is strictly conditioned by the process of deterioration and death though there is also a process of conservation of life through perpetuation, continuity through progeny.

The discovery of evolution reveals many facts and the attempt to explain each and every thing genetically discovered even in matter things that did not even suggest themselves when it was dealt with mechanically. A vitalistic account of Reality in terms of evolution threw light on the very structure and persistence of matter in all its forms, and thus we came across stupendous discoveries about the continuous processes of matter building and breaking, comparable to or analogous to the processes of anabolism and katabolism, and more of growth and perpetuation and persistence in and through different forms of organization suitable to life or living (existing).

A philosophy of evolution however had not only to take into consideration the phenomena of biological growth and mutations, but also subjectively come to recognize the play of intelligence in and through the structures of nerves, glands, muscles,

blood vessels and so on. Intelligence itself seems to be operating through these which it seems to have formed. But the more important feature is the emergence of external awareness or awareness of external objects which have to be dealt with and conquered or adapted to. Consciousness then became a factor that has to be reckoned with, and consciousness the handmaid of intelligence. If instinct is unconscious intelligence, it will be found that intellect or mind is conscious intelligence. We became aware that at the back of all Reality including matter there is an intelligence which works or is working as law planning and scheming inviolately, and its cosmic proportions reveal its many planal existence; as unconscious, sub-conscious, and conscious, and amid ignorance or inertness there is a prodigality of intelligence, before which human intelligence and reason quakes in awe and wonder.

The mentalistic attempt to know Reality is of course said to be humanistic in so far as it approaches Reality through Reason which is said to be not available to the lower living creatures. To us generally speaking the ideological approach to Reality or approach through Ideas is natural. But ideas themselves are in one sense taken from the perceived world, and as such there are sensate ideas (images which have tended to become symbolic of things or sensations-actions), and in another sense they are also the peculiar products of reason that sees them to be universal or in many objects and things etc....The discovery of identity—idea, universality of idea, is not a biological reaction as such but a process of attempting to perceive Reality not as particulars as such but as a Whole comprising particulars in which the particulars participate. The particulars themselves contain the phase or facet of the universal. This is not a discovery of the sense or even of instinct but of reason. The grasping of the universal in the particulars, the general in the individual things etc., is the exclusive function of the reason: sense does not contribute to it and as such it is the differentia of Reason, and in this sense innate. Human experience is not possible without reason grasping the universals. Man is a universalising entity.

It is not so much psychology as the reasoning factor that

differentiates man from the animal. Human thinking is based on his reason. Philosophy at this level is idealistic, in the sense that it deals with ideas as the material of its knowledge : all knowing is through ideas, generals or universals. Even the collective is a biological fact and one wonders whether lower animal minds work in collective as the unity or unit of their existence and not the universal. However human mind again is not of the same power of perception at all places. As there are grades in the elements and in animals, so too there are in men ; and thus we find materialistic men particularise their existence and collectivise it ; the biologically minded human wishes to act organically and is far from universalised thinking and his unity is organic unity of the collective mass. The dialectical mechanism is replaced by the organic and it is of course more suited to man than the mechanical unity of the machine, robot, etc....

Man is the creature who classifies and generalises and yet it is all done with the power of analysis that is going along with synthesis. Yet he deals with the particulars, but he becomes aware of the whole. He is aware of a universe and indeed constructs a plan of his universe and sees laws operating in the sphere or his world. All his culture is based upon his attempt to know the world and himself and the laws of their relation. He has also the rare inventiveness of hypothesising and hypostatizing relations and entities. Undoubtedly his philosophies have varied from sensate knowledge and construction to abstract ideation and construction. His supreme merit lies in his wielding his mind in a beautiful manner of sheer imagination. He had oscillated from one extreme of sheer deterministic materialism to deterministic spiritualism, and from realism to illusionism or idealism. Reason liberated from the strings of instinctive fear and materialistic determinism and dialectic has helped him to build a world of his own. Thus Philosophy took birth or rather philosophies took birth, and it was a fact that philosophy did not care a hoot for utility or existence also. It discovered a new dimension to existence. Reality for its own sake and not for the sake of man. Such a selflessness of man's reason was a triumph over biology.

Philosophical thinking has canvassed all its past, and has prepared itself for its future. Reality instead of being discovered was made to discover itself.

Philosophy in different keys has begun to operate. It limited itself to know only one field of its action and produced a naturalistic philosophy and this too it divided into two sectors, the living and the non-living. Then it limited itself to the study of man, and produced a philosophy for oneself and a philosophy for others, a personal and the descriptive and also a philosophy of self and others also. It began to look at man through nature as a natural product and nature from the standpoint of oneself and as a product of mind of man. It transcended itself when it discovered that Nature is not a construct of mind or man or a cooperative or competitive construction by all. Astronomical dimensions and irreducible plurality prevented a solipsistic construction of Reality. Above all man's attempt to dismiss reality as a myth or illusion has only aroused problems of deepest concern—the future of man himself.

A love of wisdom has shewn that all materialistic, biological or vitalistic or mentalistic constructions or views of Reality are unsatisfying. Man's own reason is riddled with a contradiction, a will to be exact with instruments that he has, and a will to know what is beyond them: neither senses however developed and evolved through instinct impulsion to greater and greater endeavours nor instinctive knowing dependable but altogether specific to certain ends and incapable of being used beyond them, nor even mind with its dichotomic classifications and explanations or generalisations have helped to satisfy the growing love of Reality as it is.

Mentalistic or idealistic philosophy has come to a brilliant end. So philosophers have to go beyond mind, the mind of man. This of course is to be pessimistic about the humanistic ends and optimisms. Certain thinkers aver however that the lack of faith in man is something amounting to treachery. Humanistic thinkers have been fighting hard against bringing in the power and the light that might directly come from reality, if it could come. Lack of faith in the human mind—what has not the human

mind prepared for man, his present civilization and comfort and scientific gadgets and amenities that make life livable! There are persons who think that the human mind if it is but educated in the proper way, socially or sociologically conditioned, will make man a more tamed creature for good and make him accept socialism as a heaven of ultimate value. Unfortunately the social habituation may deprive man of the very value which he grants to himself and indeed it is the one fact that refuses to yield to the lures of paradise even of gods, not to speak of pleasures of socialism.

A philosophy that removes the individual man or 'soul', (now we can speak of this as soul because it cannot limit itself to the material body, vitalistic life and mentalistic ideation-generality, but seeks a greater truth of itself) cannot be satisfying. Whether anthropcentricism is a variant of ego-centricism or not, it is clear that ego-centricism seeks to be truly interpreted in its highest value and if necessary refuted or superseded but it cannot be dismissed by the mind and its social generalisations or hedonistic promises of socialistic paradise.

Thus our survey showed how philosophy has come to a point when it can no longer be content with the knowing of matter, life or mind, brilliant and useful though such knowledge has been, for it does not include the basic fundamental sense of existence or Reality for the soul of man.

Many indeed have been the attempts to circumvent this want : God has been proposed as the alter "other" for the individual, one who can complement his lack or supplement it. Man had always been able to feel his finiteness. All the efforts of philosophers and others have been to assure man of his freedom from finiteness or bondage to the limitations of his body, breath and intelligence.

As has been his philosophy so has been his god or ideal : thus a materialist requires a visible and tangible reality for his ideal or object of worship which will help him to get over the limitations of his finite existence. Threat to this even is one of the constant things he is aware of. Thus he has idols or icons as objects of his worship or rivers and trees, which in a sense may suggest the majesty and power of God. (As has been remarked

that which you worship that do you become). There is the steadiness of matter and assurance of basic being in such a worship.

Thus we get at men who are interested in just preserving old customs and patterns of living and being and want no change. Changelessness is the one significant gain of this consciousness.

But no sooner than the materialist perceives change to significant he refuses to hug to permanence and seeks change. His God is a vital living God and even a struggling victorious Godhead, biological master of growth but unfortunately even such vital Godheads pass away. Avatars and prophets pass away. To them the conquest over death has not been possible. There finiteness remains as a significant reminder that the best have yet not been the best at all. However man has worshipped leaders and saints and Avatars, made icons of them and built temples too to imitate their excellences and feel fulfilment of oneself. The day of the finite Gods and suffering Gods however has made worship of gods themselves meaningless. Again if you worship a dying God you too will seek death though through martyrdom and so on.

Just as permanence was not secure so too change shewed the difficulty of having it as a constant ideal or goal for man.

Men tried to find the permanent in the permanent Ideas or Reason discovered abstract concepts which survive the passage of the individual things and teachers. The dream of Utopias, the Celestial world of Ideas or things which never suffer any change being beyond all time and its processes, was one of the most exciting adventures of thought and mental philosophers found supreme consolation in the Impersonal Reality of these Eternal Ideas such as Good, Truth and Beauty. Value itself was transformed into a concept and man himself found himself to be a mind—not any one's mind. Law became more important than any law-giver or maker. An impersonal God if we so speak of this Nirguna System of Ideas has been the result. Liberation from particulars meant the dissolution of oneself in the Ultimate Absolute beyond all temporal process. This vast discovery of the intellectual God—the Law of Dharma has played the role of Religion of Reason profoundly.

And man became depersonalised : as is the god you worship that do you become is as true here also. An extension of the same formula or axiom is you become a member of the sangha or company and of their mind association brings about changes in oneself on a par with those of other members.

However the individual man rebels sooner or later. Not because he remembers his animal and material nature and refuses to live up to the demands of mind impersonalising, but because there is a larger truth beyond it.

As it has been pointed out, there can be observed the recurring similarity between the materialist and the mentalist, due to their being inversions of the vital : and conceived to be opposites because of the twist. So too the vital must be apprehended as a lower twist of the intuitive.

The superpersonal nature of Reality when it undergoes an inversion arrives at an impersonalism, and this when it turns and twists becomes the vital particular, and this in turn becomes the mechanical particulars. This is the principle of *anatrope* or *invertendo* of Plato or *vivarta* (a concept not properly understood by Shankara and Mayavada).

Man realises that the impersonal is not all and its meaning and significance do not lie in itself but in something higher. Even as the meaning of light does not lie in itself nor of life in itself. The whole gamut of Reality comprising as it does all these phases is to be known through Wisdom which perceives the Highest as being represented in all that has descended from it. The lower find their explanation and fulfilment in the Highest and the Ultimate. This highest or even the higher than the mental we can call luminous even as it has been the luminous to the animal. The World conceived as the Luminous to the mental will find the religion of Luminous a Godhead who will explain all and connect us with Him in a way quite distinct from how we connect ourselves with other fellows of our kind and Nature below us and around us.

The higher powers are called Divine invariably, though here again we must emphasize that there can be hierarchies among these powers—ranging from the least to the most or the Ultimate.

Mankind has worshipped different Gods owing to the philosophies of Reality they have had. Natural powers when recognized as luminous to man's activity and apprehension have been apotheosized; and we have been able to find the apotheosis of the warriors of the world, the saints and prophets of the world, who have contributed to the rich abundance of human technical efficiency : these people brought joy into the home of man, and gave him culture and civilization that lasts as tradition and custom and law long afterwards : we have also apotheosized the mental powers even as we have done the vital powers and personalized the impersonal and impersonalised the personal. The logic of the human mind has delighted in this constant transaction and transformation of the personal into the impersonal law, and in the sphere of politics has constantly indulged in specious generalisations, by force and selection of material and so on. Atheism is the significant acceptance of Philosophy without Religion, a world of law without any possibility of personal relationship with its central being. It is objectivity on the plane of mind ruling out all else.

This impersonalistic religion if so it may be called is an unstable one not because the impersonals are not universals, but because the human individual is not impersonal.

The realm of Ignorance ends here for man for with this impersonalism and impersonal God ends the search for a complete philosophy because as rightly remarked by Sri Aurobindo, the mental world is a world of infinite possibilities, and possibility of scepticism and doubt is as real as the contrary possibility of certainty and faith. With a world thus poised on disjunctive possibilities and basic relativity. Thus one is compelled to go beyond the mental philosophy. Intellectual philosophy is committed to agnosticism and its impersonalisms cannot make one pass beyond it. Religion must be an act of will which goes beyond the given of intellect and its "relative" absolutes.

One discovery of the intellect has been the discovery of the triple modes of its being, as thought, as feeling and as will and the further discovery that will that discovers that thought cannot lead it to a solution of the complicated problems of self must jump beyond thought itself to the larger perceptions open to it alone.

Thus Will becomes the instrument of our ascent, a will guided by a faith in the Vast Reality transcending the intellect. It is not a mere exercise of power which the vital knows, it is not will to live or perpetuate or preserve oneself: it is not a will merely to adapt oneself or a will to happiness here. It is the will that seeks a basic sense of its own value or the value of the Universal Reality which it was constantly seeking but not finding in intellect. It is not pessimism about man and his mind but a realisation of the fact of its utter incompetency to grant to man the sense of ultimate value to himself and to Reality.

Supermanism is said to be a kind of snobbery and a quick solution which cannot be a solution at all unless it is realised and made real to man as his own possibility even as the technical progress of science has done. Thus it is usual to dismiss supermanism as a dream and fantastic biological illusion. Unfortunately though the evolution of the superman from out of the stock of men may be achieved biologically (and perhaps must be), yet it is not exclusively as such we have to accept the appearance of the supermind or supermental activity. Already most of the intellect in its discoveries has been going on by the descent or appearance of intuitive insights which could not be explained since they could not emerge from the activities of the logical process of deduction and definition and induction or leaps of imagination or generalising.

Intuition as a peculiar in-knowing of objects both things and processes and man and crowds, has played the supreme part in our creative civilization and culture. Again and again we find men of supreme intuition have posed axioms which looked particularly impossible in the context of old knowledges or assumptions. By changing the assumptions or granting revolutionary assumptions sages and saints have produced changes of the human mind. Our present human mind is three-fourths living on insights and intuitions and all that intellect has done is to discover reasons, rationalisations, i.e. good or bad reasons, for these acceptances. In fact if we consider that all laws of Nature and psychology are insighted assumptions and our philosophies also, then it follows that intellect has played an admirable part of servant of intuition rather than led

up to intuition at all. Of course there are humanistic philosophers who would rather suggest gravely that intuition itself is a product of thinking hard, though more appropriately it may be claimed that intuition comes in when intellect has given up thinking. When intellect has blocked all passages of descent of higher knowledge and has declared itself bankrupt then does Intuition discover a way or venue of descent, either subjectively or objectively or vividly as symbolic implication or assumption. A new set of assumptions come into the vision of the Seer or prophet or Thinker with a flash of insight into Reality. Thus new philosophies are born and new Gods become our objects of devotion.

The intuitive mind is personal and yet it is universal : it is not limited to a specific experience or object but grants a whole ultimate organic relation both in function and non-function, as growth and in change.

This is the first definition of the Infinite and the whole of Religion is the attempt to discover this logic of the Infinite and thus Philosophy is bound to lean on this religious quest for its own fulfilment. Religion as intuition and not as tradition or ritual is bound to augment the forces of the will that wills the Universal and Ultimate and not merely the Good. Thus we pass beyond the claims of intelleætual philosophy to be philosophy as such or the Ultimate Philosophy. Similarly we have to reject the claims of religion of the material and vital and mental as not being insighted by Ultimate value and point out that a New Religious spirit which includes the daring mystic will alone can grant that Wisdom which the Philosopher yearns for.

Can I now state that it has been the endeavour of Sri Aurobindo in all his works to disentangle the threads of philosophy and religion in order to place in clear light the double play of the Ultimate and the individual through the flashes of insight that not merely illumine but impel the change that is of moment to Reality and not less to Humanity itself.

If humanism is not willing to lose its name then may it be that it will exalt itself with a new connotation in power and not just in name and claim for itself divinity of the impoverished intellect and ill-directed vital and ignorant matter.

However the true reconciliation of Philosophy and Religion cannot happen at the level lower than the Supermind : their integration lies in the personality of the superman.

K. C. VARADACHARI

THE TEACHINGS OF THE MOTHER

EDUCATION

X

THE double work of inner purification and integration and the perfecting of the outer instruments can best be done, says the Mother, by a fourfold discipline : psychic, mental, vital, and physical. These four aspects of the discipline are not to be taken separately and practised one after the other, but all together. Because man is a composite being, his self-discipline must needs be coordinated and composite. All the members of his being are inextricably intertwined. The progress of one member cannot fail to have beneficial effects, even as the retrogression or degeneracy of one has harmful effects, upon the others. But the starting-point is, as the Mother says, the psychic discipline. "We give the name 'psychic' to the psychological centre of our being, the seat within of the highest truth of our existence, that which can know and manifest this truth." Nothing can be, indeed, more important than being aware of our psychic being and, uniting with it, making it the pilot of our development and fulfilment. This awareness, this discovery, I repeat, must be the very fulcrum of a true education. In fact, no system that ignores the soul of the student or fails to make its discovery the starting-point, can be called education at all. The influence and example of the parents and the teacher, the influence of the environment and of the books of study must all contribute to the kindling of a thirst for the discovery of the soul. Education must be so devised as to be automatically psycho-centric.

Once we are conscious of the presence of the psychic within us, we should strive to realise and unite with it. But how can it be discovered and realised ? This is a question that occurs to everyone at the beginning of the quest. There are many ways of

discovering it, but it can be definitely stated that if the will to discover it is sincere and unflagging, a way is sure to reveal itself. No spiritual aspiration ever goes in vain. "Ask and it shall be given thee" is a truth which has never yet been disproved in the history of spiritual culture. "Through space and time many methods have been framed to attain this perception and finally to achieve this identification. Some methods are psychological, some religious, some even mechanical."¹ But everybody has to find out his own way, for no two persons walk on the same path. Everybody must make it the primary business of his life to discover the central truth and reality of his being; for, indeed, life has no sense and significance so long as this discovery is not made. Our intellectual and aesthetic pursuits, our desires and needs and their satisfaction, our social duties and responsibilities, our emotional ties and obligations, all must be relegated to a secondary place, and many of them even reoriented and reorganised in such a way as to conduce to the momentous discovery of the psychic. "Whatever you do, whatever your occupation and activity, the will to find the truth of your being and to unite with it must always be living, always present behind all that you do, all that you experience, all that you think."²

It may be thought that the Mother is speaking of only spiritual education, and not of the general education which will equip us for the battle of life. But the fourfold discipline she has prescribed is so comprehensive and synthetic that such a charge of one-sidedness cannot surely be brought against her scheme of education. The four main components of a human being are his body, life, soul, and mind. The Mother's scheme provides for the harmonious development and perfectioning of all these components. It is, indeed, a simultaneous development of all these parts of man, and a perfect unfoldment of all their possibilities that constitutes an integral education. But since the soul of man is his central being, and the other parts its instruments, its awakening is rightly considered as the supreme primary aim of education. The first question that confronts man as soon as his intelligence

¹ & ² *Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on Education*,

has developed is : "Who am I ?" He may try to smother the question or evade it for some time, and allow his intelligence to be clouded and warped by his short-sighted preconceptions, but not for ever. It will recur, it will rankle, it will keep up a sense of void, a sense of want, a vague, quivering, insistent agony of an inner thirst unquenched.

It is true that the perfectioning of the instruments, mind, life and body, is indispensable for life-expression. A sound educational training must perforce occupy itself with it as best it can. But what is it that expresses itself through these instruments ? The master of the instruments is certainly much more important than the instruments, and must be the central concern in any sensible scheme of education. If scepticism or scientific realism denies the existence of a master, and looks upon man as nothing but an automatic mechanism, working by a self-generating, purposeless energy, there is no reason why those who have a clearer perception and a deeper insight should choose to be led by its blindness. Has not the present cultural crisis proved the dismal failure of the current system of education and the utter bankruptcy of all sensate creeds that give rise to endless problems which they know not how to solve ?

The educationists, whether they believe in God and the soul or not, whether they believe in religious and moral life or not, all are agreed that the ignorance of man must be dispelled, and that the extirpation of ignorance is the chief aim of education. But where they disagree is the meaning of the word 'ignorance'. What is ignorance ? The whole problem of education pivots upon this question.

The huge machinery invented by modern scientific ingenuity for propagating the benefits of education to the masses of the peoples of the world and removing their 'ignorance' has produced spectacular results. The percentage of literacy has been steadily increasing. Books of all kinds, purporting to impart knowledge of all subjects under the sun, and pleasure and entertainment to all who seek them, are being printed in billions in almost all languages and dialects of the world and made easily available to all. Radio, cinema, and television are cooperating with the

educators to drive out the spectre of ignorance from human society. More and more people are reading more and more books on more and more subjects than the old liberal education prescribed even for the higher courses of the universities. And, besides, there are newspapers and journals of all sorts, selling their expert knowledge and views to all sections of society. But has ignorance been dispelled? Is there peace and contentment in the society? Have nobility and honesty increased in humanity? Are there harmony and happiness in life? Is man more intelligent, more imaginative than his forbears? And more original and profound in his intellectual and aesthetic creations? Let us listen to two outstanding thinkers of the West, speaking on the results of modern education, which modern civilisation flaunts as the crest-jewel of its achievements:

"In fact our ignorance is profound. Most of the questions put to ourselves by those who study human beings remain without answer. Immense regions of our inner world are still unknown. ...We know that we are a compound of tissues, organs, fluids, and consciousness. But the relations of consciousness and cerebrum are still a mystery. We lack almost entirely a knowledge of the physiology of nervous cells. To what extent does will power modify the organism? How is the mind influenced by the state of the organs? In what manner can the organic and mental characteristics, which each individual inherits, be changed by the mode of life, the chemical substances contained in food, the climate, and the physiological and moral disciplines?

"We are very far from knowing what relations exist between skeleton, muscles and organs, and mental and spiritual activities. We are ignorant of the factors that bring about nervous equilibrium and resistance to fatigue and diseases. We do not know how moral sense, judgment, and audacity could be augmented. What is the relative importance of intellectual, moral and mystical activities? What is the significance of aesthetic and religious sense? What form of energy is responsible for telepathic communications? Without any doubt, certain physiological and mental factors determine happiness or misery, success or failure. But

we do not know what they are. We cannot artificially give any individual the aptitude for happiness. As yet we do not know what environment is the most favourable for the optimum development of the civilised man. Is it possible to suppress struggle, effort, and suffering from our physiological and spiritual formation? How can we prevent the degeneracy of man in modern civilisation?

"...In spite of the immense sums of money expended on the education of children and the young people of the United States, the intellectual elite does not seem to have increased.... In modern civilisation the individual is characterised chiefly by a fairly great activity, entirely directed towards the practical side of life, by much ignorance, by a certain shrewdness, and by a kind of mental weakness which leaves him under the influence of the environment wherein he happens to be placed. It appears that intelligence itself gives way when character weakens. For this reason, perhaps, this quality, characteristic of France in former times, has so markedly failed in that country. In the United States the intellectual standard remains low, in spite of the increasing number of schools and universities.... In practically every country there is a decrease in the intellectual calibre of those who carry responsibility of public affairs.... It is chiefly the intellectual and moral deficiencies of the political leaders, and their ignorance, which endanger modern nations.... We are unhappy. We degenerate morally and mentally.... We are the victims of the backwardness of the sciences of life over those of matter.

"The only possible remedy for this evil is a much more profound knowledge of ourselves.... In bringing to light our true nature, our potentialities and the way to actualise them, this science (the science of life) will give us the explanation of our physiological weakening, and of our moral and intellectual diseases....

"We must rescue the individual from the state of intellectual, moral, and physiological atrophy brought about by modern conditions of life: develop all his potential activities: give him health: re-establish him in his unity, in the harmony of his

personality ; induce him to utilise all the hereditary qualities of his tissues and his consciousness : break the shell in which education and society have succeeded in enclosing him ; and reject all systems. We have to intervene in the fundamental organic and mental processes. These processes are man himself. But man has no independent existence. He is bound to his environment. In order to remake him we have to transform his world.”¹

The many-sided ignorance of man to which the above thinker draws pointed attention, is a fact of common experience; and his diagnosis is also more or less, correct. But the remedy he suggests is not radical enough to be fully effective. However, he has very ably argued the case against the claim of modern civilisation that the educational system it has devised is the best ever conceived.

On the same subject of the disastrous failure of modern education, another thinker of international fame writes : “If education had been purely constructive, if science and technology had served only the God of Creation and not the Mammon of Destruction, if their fruits had not been misused, they might have constituted a potent remedy. Unfortunately school education has contained within itself many a destructive element. It has all too frequently been a mere superficial veneer, making neither for true intelligence nor for ennoblement of character.”²

That education has palpably failed to combat and conquer ignorance cannot be disputed except by rank unreason and obstinate blindness, masquerading as scientific enlightenment. It has not only failed to conquer ignorance, it has greatly increased it, and assured and justified its life by throwing overboard all higher values of existence, and debasing human nature by a deliberate disregard of all forms of self-discipline. Harnessed to the demands of a commercialised society, and often forced to meet the exigencies of national power-politics, it has tended to put a premium upon rivalry, competition, camouflage and dodging, which cannot but pollute the consciousness of the youth and imperil

¹ Dr. Alexis Carrel in his *Man the Unknown*.

² Pitrim A. Sorokin in his *Reconstruction of Humanity*.

the security and cultural progress of humanity. A defiant flouting of discipline¹ is the prevailing atmosphere in almost all centres of education. Licence is confounded with independence of spirit, and anarchy with freedom of initiative. It is for this reason that the Mother cries halt to this corroding system of education, and propounds a scheme which will really eradicate ignorance and usher in the regenerating and integrative light of true knowledge.

The work of the discovery of our true being must go hand-in-hand with that of mental development, as with the other developments of the nature. The mental instrument—it must not be forgotten that it is only an instrument—can be a help or a hindrance to the growth of our composite personality according as it is used wisely or unwisely. The normal human mind is narrow, rigid (even when it plumes itself upon its flexibility) and attached to its own thoughts and ideas. It refuses to take a sympathetic view of the thoughts and ideas of others. Even when it feels inclined to be sympathetic, it finds it difficult—there is a strong knot of egoism at its centre which makes it blind to the truth of other standpoints than its own. This narrowness and self-centred rigidity are found even in minds which have received an ample measure of education and enlightenment. Sometimes in highly developed minds, one meets with an amazing incapacity to look beyond their familiar horizons. No mental progress of a revolutionary nature is possible if one allows one's consciousness to remain enclosed within the confines of the human mind. It is essential to endeavour to enlarge the mind, to teach it how to transcend its habitual formations, to make it more supple and charitable, and develop in it the capacity for entering with empathy into the thoughts and ideas of others and study the different aspects of truth. For if the mind remains a prisoner of its own predilections, it cannot receive and express the manifold truth of the soul. In order to make the mind wide and plastic and capable of receiving all forms of truth, even those that appear to be

¹ "Every man is a tamer of wild beasts, and these wild beasts are his passions. To draw their teeth and claws, to muzzle and tame them, to turn them into servants and domestic animals, fuming perhaps, but submissive—in this consists personal education."—Amiel's Journal.

contradictory to one another, the Mother advises the following exercise : "A clearly formulated thesis is set; against it is opposed the antithesis, formulated with the same precision. Then by careful reflection the problem must be widened or transcended so that a synthesis is found which unites the two contraries in a larger, higher and comprehensive idea."¹ There are many other exercises for enlarging the mind and rendering it supple and accommodating. Some of them not only train the mind but improve the character as well by promoting self-control, control over one's feelings and emotions which colour and condition one's reason and thoughts to a great extent. One form of such self-control is very helpful in the education of the mind. The Mother says : "You must not allow your mind to judge things and people; for the mind is not an instrument of knowledge—it is incapable of finding knowledge—but it must be moved by knowledge. Knowledge belongs to a region much higher than that of the human mind, even beyond the region of pure ideas. The mind has to be made silent and attentive in order to receive knowledge from above and manifest it. For it is an instrument of formation, organisation and action. And it is in these functions that it attains its full value and utility."²

This bit of advice is sure to baffle the modern mind, which has the inveterate habit of indulging in criticism and judgment in regard to all things that come within its purview, whether it knows them well or not. Facile and flippant in criticism, in patronising appraisalment or gratuitous "debunking"; supercilious and sententious in its judgments, it is likely to revolt against this advice of the Mother, lest it should lose its most cherished occupation. It will resent this advice as an outrage upon its right to freedom of thought and speech, so highly prized in this age of democracy, even as a threat to its very existence ! But the advice carries in it not a threat to the mind's existence, but the secret of its salvation, the secret of its release from its dim and narrow cell into the infinitudes of Light, to which the mystics of all ages and climes bear unanimous witness, the secret of its rebirth into an unconditioned freedom of creative fulfilment,

¹ & ² *Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on Education*,

Besides, in this age of noise (Aldous Huxley's expression), to practise silence, to lull the feverish unrest of the mind to sleep in an aspiration for true knowledge, would require a long and arduous effort. But progress never comes as a windfall. It has to be paid for.

The Mother counsels another practice : not to cling on to one's point of view whenever there is a disagreement with others, but to put oneself in their place and try to understand their points of view. The freedom of thought and speech which one jealously guards for oneself must be, in all fairness, conceded to others. How many misunderstandings, how many futile wrangles, how many bitter recriminations and ugly scenes can be avoided, let alone other more serious consequences, on a wider scale, in social, national and international affairs, if this salutary teaching is faithfully followed ! Many a harassing problem of life can be solved by this catholic, charitable, and plastic attitude of the mind. It is a discipline which forms an integral part of mental education.

(To be continued)

RISHABHCHAND

THE LIFE DIVINE

(*An Outline*)

VOL II.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE DIVINE LIFE

WE have tried to discover what is the reality and the significance of our existence in the material universe. If our existence is an inconsequential freak of matter or a freak of Spirit or a fantasy, there can be no essential significance. But if there is a self-existent Reality then there must be a truth of that Reality which is working itself out. That Reality has taken the aspect of a becoming in Time. The significance determines our destiny which already exists in us as a necessity and potentiality. If there is a Reality unrolling itself in Time, that reality is secretly what we have to become.

Consciousness and life are the two terms being worked out in Time; without them Matter would be meaningless. But consciousness and life are both something incomplete and still in process. For us consciousness is Mind, which is an intermediate, imperfect power that is still growing towards something beyond itself. It rose out of lower levels of consciousness and must rise to higher. Prior to the thinking mind there was an unthinking, living consciousness; and before that the unconscious. After us there is likely to be a greater consciousness, not dependent on thought. The essence of consciousness is the power to be directly aware of itself and its objects. If it is indirect it is because consciousness is weighed down by the Inconscient. But yet its destiny is to evolve into its own perfection and true nature; that is, to become perfect in awareness. This to us is a super-conscience beyond our mind; but this is the direction of the evolution of our consciousness. This evolution is possible only if the Inconscience is an involved Superconscience. Such an

involved Power we can conceive the Inconscient to be when we see how out of an unconscious Energy and a vast involved Intelligence an emerging consciousness has evolved and is yet evolving. The Reality that is yet to emerge we have named Supermind or Gnosis.

If consciousness is the central secret, life is the effective power in Matter that liberates consciousness. But life is yet imperfect and is evolving through the growth of Consciousness. Man's life is also imperfect because mind is not the highest power of consciousness. What is involved is Spirit, whose dynamism of consciousness is supermind. If therefore life has to become a manifestation of the Spirit, it has to become manifest in a supramental or gnostic being.

Spiritual life is a growth into divine living. As life and mind become illumined with the light of the spirit they begin to reflect the divinity and this increases until the whole existence is unified in the light and power of the spiritual principle. But the evolutionary urge demands that the whole of mind, life and body must be re-created outwardly as well as inwardly. A collective life of gnostic beings must be established in the earth-nature. First the spiritual entity in us must integralise the whole being and be the guiding power of all our action.

Although there can be a spiritual life within, which is not dependent on the outer manifestation, the outer action must necessarily express the inner status. The spiritual man living in the realisation of the Divine within him, would cast the reflection on his outer acts. But yet this would only be an individual liberation. For a greater dynamic change in the earth-nature itself there must be the appearance of a new order of beings; and this means the gnostic change, and the gnostic way of living.

The whole foundation of the gnostic life must be inward; for it is the inner, spiritual Reality that must be built up to use mind, life and body as its instrumentaion. The outer expressions serve this inner Reality. From the viewpoint of our surface existence it is the world that seems to create us, but the spiritual life reveals that it is we who must create ourselves and our world. We are given an imperfect world and an obscure external conscious-

ness; and yet we are vaguely aware of something in us urging towards the creation of perfection. It is this inner urge that impells us to remake the world into a greater image, an image of its own spiritual growth.

While our mind is obscure and divided it is led in three different directions. It turns towards a concentration on our own inner spiritual growth; or on an individual development of our surface nature; or on making the world better, more suited to our ideas and conception of what should be. On the one side is the call of our spiritual being, and on the other there is the demand of the world. There is also the divided demand of our being of Nature, poised between these two terms and connecting them. Although this outer being seems to be made by the world, yet it is a disguised manifestation of a greater spiritual being within us. It mediates between our inner perfection and our outer preoccupation with this world. But the true foundation of a perfected life is the Reality within us.

Our first preoccupation, then, is to build up an inner life of the spirit; and this inner life can help us in converting our whole surface being and action. A perfected human world must be created by men who are themselves perfect; that is who are re-created within. The being must grow from within, although outer influences may also help.

Nature strives to bring something into being; mere knowledge, thought and action cannot be the object of life, but only the powers of being or of its becoming. Man's physical mind sees Nature's creation only through an exterior process, but Nature's process is hidden. At the spiritual stage of evolution we must make contact with this hidden process. We must become our true inner self, by growing and living within. From there we have to create the spiritual mind, life and body, and through this instrumentation create a world which shall be the true environment of a divine living. But first it is necessary for the individual to discover the divine reality within him and express that in all his being and living.

We must be wholly conscious of our being. This self-awareness is what is meant by spiritual knowledge. All action must be this self-existent consciousness formulating itself.

One must also come into possession of all one's force of self; otherwise we exist only in the immobile self, which is not the fullness of being. Just as the spiritual consciousness is self-existent, so the force of our spiritual being must be self-existent, and all its instrumentality must be expressive of its being. Thus all existence must be able to fulfil the conscious will of the spirit. All other action is incomplete and imperfect.

There must also be the full delight of being. All pain and suffering are signs of imperfection and arise from division and incompleteness. To become complete in consciousness, force and delight is the integrated completeness.

We must also exist universally. All being is one, and to be fully is to be all that is. A necessary condition of the divine living is that one exists in the being of all, while all are included in one's being, conscious of the consciousness of all and integrated with the universal force, feeling all selves as one's own self.

The spiritual fullness of the being is eternity and hence there must be also the transcendental fullness, a consciousness of the timeless eternal being. To transcend consciousness of the body, to hold the body only as an instrument is a first condition of divine living. As a second condition, mind is transcended, and hence controlled. Thirdly life is transcended and used as an instrumentation of the self. The body, life and mind only feel their own fullness of being when there is the physical oneness with all material existence, the oneness with all life, and the oneness with all minds. One must transcend the individual formula, as well as the universe, so that both can find their harmonisation in the Transcendence, which they are in their essence. Otherwise the individual remains subject to the cosmic movement, and cannot feel his oneness with the supreme divine Reality. For this he must evolve out of the Ignorance into the Knowledge, and through the Knowledge into the supreme Consciousness.

All this is impossible without the inward living and finding one's true existence by opening into the largeness of the inner self and life. The transcendence and universality are in our inner being, and only by an inner growth can we universalise and transcendentalise the being. This dynamic centre, the soul, is veiled in

us, but by our inward concentration we can enter into ourselves and live within.

This living inward is difficult for the normal human consciousness, for the inner is held to be dark, empty and morbid. This can only be true for the physical man, the born extrovert; but it is also true for the introvert who looks superficially inside himself and does not see his spiritual self. The first reaction of the mentality looking inwards from the surface is one of darkness. But when there has entered the power of a more inner living, the movement of going within brings an enlargement, a greater vision and joy of being which is greater than the outer or surface man. A silence, even an immense emptiness, is part of the spiritual experience; and the physical mind has developed a certain fear of this experience which it confuses with cessation or non-existence. But it is a silence of the spirit which is the condition of a greater knowledge, and the emptiness is the freeing of our lower nature from its mixture and conflicts. It is a plunge into the superconscience.

This inward turn is the first step towards true universality, and brings us the truth of our external existence as well as the inner. Our universalisation on the surface is not the real thing, for our surface consciousness maintains a separation of our consciousness from others; and the ego is there, though veiled behind all our actions. An external unity is but an association meeting on a common external level; it rises above the conflict but does not overcome it. The spiritual consciousness bases its action in the collective life on an inner experience and an inner sense and reality of oneness. This sense of oneness gives the individual the perception of the true need of life.

In the gnostic life there will be a complete consciousness of the self, mind, life and physical being of others, felt as one's own. The gnostic being will act out of this intimate oneness, enlightened by a sense of the will of the Divine Reality in him and in all. He sees a divine working everywhere. There is no separative ego; it is the Transcendent and Universal that moves out through his individuality. This universality in action is the law of his divine living.

This individual perfection is the first essential condition of a perfected life on earth. The perfection of the relation of the individual with all around him is the second preoccupation, and lies in the universality and oneness which is the result of an evolution into the gnostic consciousness. But a change in the total life of humanity can only come through the appearance of many gnostic individuals, forming a new, superior collective life. Our present human collectivities are held together by common interests, culture, social law, and ideals; or a practical accommodation or compromise is the natural constructed order. In the gnostic collectivity all will feel themselves to be embodiments of a single self, souls of a single Reality. The law and order would be an expression of the truth of a spiritually united being and life, where the spiritual forces work themselves out spontaneously in a harmony of idea, action and purpose.

An increasing standardisation is the mental method; in the gnostic communities there would be a considerable free diversity where each would create its own body of the life of the Spirit. But there would be no discord in this diversity; for there would be no ego-insistence or clamour of personal will, but a unifying sense of a common self in many consciousnesses and bodies. All would be aware of the single Consciousness-Force and see themselves as its instruments. The gnostic being would accept the Force in himself and use the power for the divine work. The truth of the spirit would not depend on a particular formation, and so forms would arise of themselves in suitable relation to other formulations; and a gnostic being would feel his harmony with the whole gnostic life around him, whatever his position in the whole. He would know how to lead, and how to subordinate himself. It is the natural order of the spirit that would exist in a common life of different degrees of the evolving gnostic being. Unity, mutuality and harmony would be the inescapable law of this gnostic collective life.

This liberation and self-fulfilment can only be reached by the mental beings' passing out of his Ignorance into a nature of spiritual self-knowledge and world-knowledge, which we call the Supernature. If our nature is a fundamental Inconscience

and Ignorance arriving only at an imperfect knowledge then our life also must be a constant imperfection. We strive to arrive at some perfection, and some order of right relation, and the right use of mind, life and body; but we only achieve a mixed half-rightness, for we cannot construct anything which goes beyond our nature which is founded in ignorance and imperfection.

Our nature is of beings ignorant of each other, rooted in a divided ego. Individual and group harmonies are formed, but in the mass the relations are constantly marred by misunderstanding, strife and discord; for there is no true union of Consciousness founded on self-knowledge. We labour to establish a social unity, but we only construct an association of interests and egos enforced by law and custom. Between community and community there is still less accommodation, with constant recurrence of strife.

It is only if our nature becomes a nature of self-knowledge and the true being, that we can perfect ourselves and our existence. If our nature is fixed then no perfection is possible in earthly life; we must seek it elsewhere. But if there is a spiritual being which is emerging, and our present state is only a half-emergence, and the Inconscient contains in itself the supernature, then what we are seeking is the eventual necessity of things. It is our destiny to become that supernature; an inner life awakened to a full consciousness will bear its inevitable fruit in a perfected existence.

The character of the gnostic consciousness is a wholeness of sight and action, a unity of knowledge and a reconciliation of all that now seems contrary. In the mental being there is a discord, so that truth becomes ineffective, and our actions distorted. Mental ideas are incomplete and cannot be fulfilled. There is similarly a disharmony between knowledge and will; so that where the knowledge may be firm the will to execute it is weak or contrary. These are defects normal to the Ignorance; and they can only be dissolved by a greater light than mind. Only as the mind grows towards gnosis does this incapacity diminish. At the same time the larger existence invades mind with the powers of a greater consciousness.

Because of the Inconscience and veils of Ignorance the correlation of knowledge and Power is not apparent in the earth life. The Inconscient is the original effective force, while conscious mind has only a limited action. Similarly the Life-Force seems to be more dynamic and effective than Mind, which is hampered in its action by its instrumentation through matter and life. And yet we see that a greater consciousness and knowledge brings with it a greater effective force. A greater power over nature must come when a still greater consciousness emerges and replaces the hampered operations of the mental Energy.

Even in the greatest mental mastery there still remains a certain fundamental subjection of mind to life and matter. But both occult knowledge and a dynamic spiritual knowledge show that this subjection of Mind to Matter is not a fundamental condition of things. Man's greatest discovery is that mind and force of spirit can overcome and control life and matter. This appears increasingly in the evolution of the gnostic nature; for the knowledge of the gnostic being is a force of consciousness. He would have a clear knowledge of self and a direct knowledge of others, and a knowledge of the hidden forces beyond our present attainment. This knowledge would be based on an intuitive consciousness and an intuitive control. The vision and will of the gnostic being would be a channel of the supramental Real-Idea and Truth-Force. He would act in the light and power of the supramental knowledge and be increasingly master of himself, and master of the energies of Nature.

These new powers of consciousness would have not only a control of mind over life and matter and spirit over mind, life and matter, but there would be also a breaking down of the barriers between soul and soul, mind and mind, life and life. This life of oneness in a common uniting consciousness can only come by a greater identity of being and consciousness between individual and individual unified in their spiritual substance. There would thus be the consciousness of each other's being, thought, feeling and a conscious communication of mind with mind, and heart with heart.

Harmony is the natural rule of the spirit and natural conse-

quence of unity in diversity. Harmony must be a spontaneous expression of the unity. In the lower order of life harmony is secured by an instinctive oneness of nature, an instinctive communication and sense-understanding. In human life this is replaced by sense-knowledge, mental perception and communication of ideas by speech. Only in the gnostic life is there a self-aware spiritual unity of being and spiritual conscious community. All the powers of direct communication of sense with sense, and life with life, would take up the old outward instruments and use them with a far greater purpose for the expression of the spirit.

The evolution of these unevolved powers of consciousness seems to our ignorant preconceptions to belong to the supernatural. A human working of marvels is accepted as a natural fact, but an instrumentation of powers of consciousness overpassing anything that Nature or man has yet organised, is not admitted as possible. But there would be nothing miraculous in such an evolution. Our mind and its powers would seem impossible from the standpoint of the limited animal consciousness, but there are in fact rudimentary elements of reason and intelligence in the animal nature. In the same way rudiments of spiritual powers belonging to the gnostic supernature are present in man.

The inner opening of mystic experience is known to bring new powers of consciousness. The question is whether the seeker should strive to use these forces. Rejection is necessary for the spiritual discipline in the immature stages; for nothing is more liable to be misused than power. But when these capacities come through our growth into a greater consciousness, as part of our spiritual growth, this bar does not operate. For there is nothing in the future evolution that is abnormal or miraculous. These new powers would thus be developed, as man develops the power of his mental nature.

An increase of the powers of consciousness would in fact be indispensable to a more perfect life. Human life rests on the assent to a composite body of common ideas, desires and aims. But there is always an imperfect understanding of the ideas and life-aims, and an imperfect will also to carry them out. There is

thus the struggle, the repression and frustration. New ideas cannot be correlated without an upheaval, life-forces create disharmony and there is the clashing diversity by the attack of disrupting forces. What is lacking is the spiritual knowledge and power, born of inner unification with others; and this belongs to the very substance of the gnostic being.

In addition to this imperfect accommodation of individuals in human society, there is also the ineffectual attempt to utilise and harmonise the forces that actuate the individual. There is the conflict between the law of love and the demands of the intellect. In order to make them concordant we have to grow into a more complete spiritual nature, and live in the light of a larger and more integral consciousness. We have to move and act in the light of a Truth which sees spontaneously what has to be done and the way to do it.

No mental construction can harmonise the complexity of our forces of being. This would be accomplished in the supramental being by taking up all the forces in a unifying consciousness and bringing them into an accorded action, which is normal to the spirit. With the establishment of the gnostic life on earth there would still be a life belonging to the less evolved order, and this would be acted upon by the law of unity and harmony of the gnostic life. The gnostic life would harmonise its existence with the less developed life.

We have to see now at what point we stand in this evolutionary progression, and what decisive step we can take. We are but striving in a half-enlightened knowledge towards perfection of life. We are swayed by three principal ideals : the perfectibility of the individual, the perfectibility of society, and the best possible relations between individuals, and the individual and society, of community with community. One ideal is the free expression of the personal being, whether it is bodily, mental or spiritual perfection. Here society is a field for the individual growth, and serves best when it gives the widest freedom and guidance for individual development. An opposite idea gives the collective life the first importance, so that the individual has to live as a cell of society; or the individual has to submerge himself in and serve

the national or communal life, which has its own soul and self-expression. In the third idea the perfection of man lies in his ethical and social relations with others; the individual lives for others in the service of all. In ancient India there was the idea of the spiritual individual; but at the same time under the moulding influence of society the individual had to pass through the various levels,—physical, vital and mental—before he could be fit for self-realisation and spiritual existence. In recent times the stress has been laid on the search for a perfect society; and latterly on the right organisation of the life of mankind as a whole. The individual is thus reduced to a member of the collectivity, subordinated to the common aims of society, and is much less regarded as a mental or spiritual being with his own right and power.

Thus on the one hand the individual is moved towards his own spiritual perfection, and on the other he is called to subordinate himself to the interests of the community. Nature urges him to affirm his individuality, while society calls him for the good of the community or the State. It is clear that this conflict is due to the groping mental ignorance of man which cannot harmonise the two opposing demands. It is only a unifying and harmonising knowledge that can find the way; and this knowledge belongs to the deeper principles of our being where oneness and integrality are native.

To find and live in the truth of the abiding Reality is the secret of perfection. This Reality is within each thing, and gives it its value of being. The universe is a manifestation of the Reality, and so is humanity; for there is a truth and self of humanity as well as a truth of the individual self. But the Reality is not limited by humanity or the individual human. And thus man—since the Reality is in him—can surpass the human. Neither is man confined within the community; for the community exists by virtue of the individuals composing it, and the individuals would not cease to exist if they were separated from the community. The individual can affirm himself either alone or in another communal life.

The individual is in fact key of the evolutionary movement, for it is he who becomes conscious of the Reality. The collectivit

is largely subconscious and has to express itself through the individual to become conscious. The individual owes his ultimate allegiance not to the State or the community but to the Truth, the Divine which is in him. His aim therefore must be to find and express that truth of being in himself and help the community in seeking for its own truth and fullness of being. As the individual moves towards spiritual freedom he moves also towards spiritual oneness. The liberated man turns more to the good of all beings. And perfection comes in the community through the affirmation in life by each individual of his own spiritual being. There can be no real perfection except by our inner self taking up all life into itself and giving it oneness, integration and harmony.

We have to find a key to a perfect unity and fullness of our complex nature. Nature began with the material life; and man must begin with that also. His next preoccupation must be to find himself as a mental being in a material life. This was the contribution of Greece to European civilisation. Reason, intellectual thought and Science are the outcome. In ancient times there was the pursuit of an ideal truth, good and beauty and a moulding of mind, life and body into that perfection. As soon as mind is sufficiently developed there awakes in man the spiritual preoccupation, leading to his perfection of mind and life by the power of the Spirit. This was the ancient Eastern ideal that has been largely abandoned by the modern spirit which is following the light of Science. All that remained from the old ideal was a mentalised and moralised humanitarianism. It was at this point that a decisive subjective turn came into modern life.

The material economic life was but a reversion to man's early preoccupation with life and matter. It is but a partial element in the whole complexity of human development. The danger for humanity is that there is no high mental and moral ideal uplifting the vital and physical man, and also no higher urge for the evolutionary advancement of man. Reason cannot uplift man; it is only the inner spiritual urge wherein lies the evolutionary stress. If he abandons that, he will himself be abandoned in the evolutionary race.

A stage has been reached in which the human mind can no

longer find its way. His external life has become ultracomplex, and serves his mental, vital and physical demands. His civilisation has become too big for him to manage. The pursuit of greater aims, the discovery of a higher truth and of a greater and diviner spirit has not yet come into man's life. At the same time Science has given him powers of the universal force and has made the life of humanity materially one. But without the inner power to create a true unity of human life, there is only a chaos of conflicting ideas and urges, claims and impulses, without finding any way out. Evolution must lead to increasing universality, but not on the basis of ego and the dividing mind. In the past man harmonised life through societies based on fixed customs or a fixed cultural system; but with the intermingling of life and the pouring in of the new ideas there is the call for a new and greater consciousness to meet and harmonise them. Reason and Science can only create a mechanised unity, not the greater unity of a whole-life.

The only truth of life that can replace the imperfect mental constructions of the past is a life of unity, mutuality and harmony born of a deeper truth of our being. It is such a reshaping of life that humanity is beginning to seek more and more. For the present burden laid on mankind is too great for the present littleness of the human personality. This is the problem that evolutionary Nature is putting before man. A larger and greater mental being and Life-Soul supported by the spiritual Self within is needed.

It is clear that a rational and scientific formula, a search for a perfected economic society, cannot solve this problem. Men are feeling the need to discover new values and a new foundation for life. But this cannot be achieved by suppressing the mind of the individual, or a mechanical unity, or the substitution of the communal for the individual ego. Such methods only open the way to blind forces which are even alien to the conscious evolution.

Where there is a forced compression and imposed unanimity of mind and life, and a mechanical organisation of the communal existence, all freedom of thought and life is eliminated, and civilisation declines. Only through the growth of consciousness can the collective soul and its life develop, and allow the free play of

mind and life so that they may become plastic instruments of the soul.

Alternatively there is the development by the enlightened reason of a new socialised life. The means for bringing this about is a better mental knowledge and the right training of the social and civic individual. But experience shows that education and intellectual training by itself cannot change man; it leaves the human ego unchanged. Nor can social machinery bring about a perfection. It can only regulate the outer action, and make the soul and mind inert. The reasoning mind can only regulate and mechanise Nature's complex movements; but the soul of humanity will either revolt against the machine or escape by withdrawal from itself and rejection of life. Man's true way is to discover his soul, and centre his life on its self-force.

As a reaction to the mechanistic society there may be a return to the religious society. But organised religion has not changed human life, because it could not insist on the inner change of the whole being. It could insist only on an acceptance of its ethical standards. Only a total spiritual direction given to the whole life and nature can uplift humanity beyond itself. Akin to the religious idea is the idea of brotherhood or unity of all guided by men of spiritual attainment. But the human ego and vital nature have proved too strong to be overcome by this religious idea working on mind and by the mind. It is only the full emergence of the soul and the full descent of the light and power of the Spirit that can transform and uplift our mental and vital nature.

This radical change of the nature seems a distant evolutionary prospect. But it is clear that a change in human nature has to take place however impossible it seems at present. But this change means a development of something which is already in our nature. What is demanded is an awakening to the knowledge of self, and the manifestation of the self and spirit within us. At the same time there must be the turn in humanity to feel the need of this change and the will to make it possible. It is to this call that the Divine Reality and Nature responds.

If spiritual individuals arise there might be a withdrawal into a spiritual solitude, and from their inner light act on man-

kind; for the gnostic individual must find others who have the same kind of inner life as himself to form a separate community. This principle has expressed itself in the past in the monastic life, which attempts to find and realise the spiritual reality in its seekers. It has not usually attempted to create a new world-order, such as religion has attempted. But these attempts have failed because of the inconscience and ignorance of our human vital nature. A common spiritual life must found itself on greater values than the mental, vital and physical values. An entirely new consciousness in many individuals transforming their whole being is needed.

Any such transformation could not establish itself altogether at once. The first step would be a general change from the old consciousness taking up the whole life into the spiritual principle. An individual transformation would not be enough to create a new collective life. At a certain stage it might be necessary to follow the age-long device of a separate community, but first in order to secure an atmosphere where the consciousness could concentrate on its evolution, and next to develop the new life in this prepared spiritual atmosphere. Here all the difficulties of the change would be met with a concentrated force. These obstacles can only be overcome if Nature is ready to bring down the power of spirit to assist in the birth of a new consciousness.

The appearance of a gnostic being or beings would mean a gnostic life living side by side with a life of beings in the ignorance. A separate spiritual community would seem to be demanded to prevent the danger of compromise with the Ignorance. There is also the possibility of conflict from the forces of Darkness, and the consequent lowering or contamination of the new principle. But the new light would bring also a new and complete power, so that its establishment of a separate life may not be necessary, and it could thus illumine life and bring new aspiration in mankind.

These are problems of the transition before the gnostic being has become established in the world-order. We can say that the gnostic consciousness established in the earth-life would have sufficient power and knowledge to protect itself from attacks of a lower order. It would, moreover, help to bring about a recon-

ciliation and harmony between the two types of life. The influence of the supramental principle would harmonise the life of the Ignorance; and the gnostic life would admit all that was spiritually turned.

Our standards are created by ignorance and cannot determine the life of Supernature. But whatever spiritual truth is there behind, these standards will reappear in the higher life as transformed elements in a new harmony. The gnostic being will not accept mind's standards, nor will he be moved to live for his ego or for the community. For he will be aware of the Divine Reality, and it is for that he will live. The truth of altruism, and the truth of individualism and of the collective ideal will be expressed through the will of that Reality. His action will be decided by the Truth of the Knowledge and will not be bound by any mental law.

All that can transform itself in that great Truth will fuse into the harmony of the gnostic life. The gnosis will itself take up whatever of itself has been put forth in our ideals and realisations of mind, life and body. The forms will change but what is real and abiding in them will undergo the necessary transformation for survival. Only the truths which man's mental construction conceal will be accepted by the gnosis. War with its destructive elements can have no place; and arts and crafts would be expressions of the truth, beauty and delight of existence. Life and body would be powers for the expression of the spirit; the right use of physical things would be part of the realised life.

The spiritual life, when it aims at transforming the world, need not be a life of ascetic bareness. To overcome Ignorance and abolish the ego, a total rejection of all things that can satisfy desire may be valid. But this standard cannot be absolute and binding on a consciousness that has risen above desire. The one rule of gnostic life would be self-expression of the Spirit, and the will of the Divine Being. The spirit would determine the law of the nature.

A life of gnostic beings living in the Divine, would be the beginning of the divine life in the world. It would be supermanhood,—but not in the mental idea of the term, as an enlarged

personality or magnified ego. This would lead to a reversion to barbarism of the past. The Titan and the Asura have no place in earthly evolution. What has to emerge is a self-realised being, a building of the spiritual self, an intensity and urge of the soul, and a deliverance of light and power and beauty. The true supermanhood is the sovereignty of the Spirit over its instruments, and a new consciousness in which humanity will find its own self-exceeding.

This would reverse the whole principle of the life of the Ignorance. The soul in fact has descended into the Inconscience in order to create and discover and conquer, so that its labours might not cease even when the Inconscience is transformed into Ignorance. Man's life is made up of these opposites of the Ignorance, and without this struggle and conflict life seems void of variety. But an empty and featureless sameness is only the mind's picture of heaven. An entry into the gnostic consciousness is an entry into the Infinite which is much greater and multitudinous and more delightful than the interest of the finite. The evolution in the Knowledge would be more beautiful and glorious and more intensive than any evolution in the Ignorance. The delight of the Spirit is ever new, its forms innumerable, its taste of delight inexhaustible. The gnostic manifestation of life would be more full and fruitful than the Ignorance.

In the evolution of material Nature there must be fullness of consciousness and fullness of life. The spirit must return to itself through a spiritual completeness of itself in life. Our evolution in the Ignorance is only the first stage. It must lead towards an evolution in the Knowledge and a self-revelation of the Divinity in things in the power of the Supernature.

N. PEARSON

THE WORD OF THE SILENCE*

ALL sounds, tunes or words, in this triple world of Ignorance are born in friction and mutual contact among two or more of the principles of existence. The energy in the physical consciousness playing on the material substance gives rise to the material sounds. The heat of animal sensations like hunger and anger, thirst and lust expands the nervous and muscular wind-pipe, stops and shapes its resonance according to the variations of its temperature. The intense pressure of emotions like enlarging love or contracting hate on the vital-physical mechanism results in the lyrical cries of ecstatic rapture or smothering anguish. The attempt of the analysing, dividing and classifying mind to express thought-energy in the realms of emotion, sensation and matter has given rise to language with its consonantal restraint of vowel looseness and length. Whether coalescing with each other and generating harmonious music or jarring with one another and producing discordant noise, they are true to their origin in strife and create the complicated and bewilderingly intricate babel of voices. Struck and beaten into existence, *āhata*, they strike and clash against each other and make the confusion of the world still more confounded. But there are other hidden worlds of harmony revealed to a subliminal vision where the sounds strike a harmony—the mental and vital heavens, the regions of the Rishis and mantras and the paradise of the gods and *rāginīs*. Similar is the organisation of the higher worlds of the Intermediate Zones of the Higher Thinking Mind, Illumined Mind, Intuition and Overmind where increasingly subtle, deep, wide, profound and sublime notes are struck with Spiritual chords which ‘pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone’. Heard melodies are sweet but those unheard are sweeter. Sometimes indeed, those rare melodies are received by the spiritualised mind and heart even in this world

* From *Last Poems* of Sri Aurobindo.

by hieratic poets, prophets and singers who strike the overhead note in the Arts. All these are notes or tunes struck in and out of a consciousness which has divided itself in several points and enjoys mutual contact, *āhati*.

But still there is a beyond.

For on the frontiers of the overmind is the Realm of the Supermind, which contains all the principles of the worlds below in their essential truth but in a state of fused identity and oneness with their origin, the Truth-Consciousness. This is a condition of Consciousness where no strife among the components is possible because of their basic identity and oneness. So it has been described by the Vedic and Upanishadic Seers as the thrice-honoured Silence : Om ! Shanti ! Shanti ! Shanti ! Or again it is pictured by the Tantric Seers as the *sāmbhavee avasthā*, the state permeated by a profound Peace and Auspiciousness. It is *the Silence*, the only condition where each is in all and all is in each positively and completely in an everlasting union. Below it are the realms of strife and separation and division ending in the complete nescience of the Inconscience. The zone of the Overmind makes the best approximation among the worlds below to the Silence, for in it Oneness is in the background of the Multiplicity and the Many enjoy a freedom to express and even assert their individuality. This approximation is, however, nowhere near the positive, fused identity of consciousness of the Supermind which alone deserves the appellation of the Silence. Movement there, is a vibration of consciousness in spiritual essence; it is the contact of consciousness with itself in spiritual substance. And it is a state of fusion of the most intense static peace with the most powerful dynamic activity. This original Spanda or vibration in tranquillity is the Word of the Silence, *anāhata nāda*. She is the Divine Mother and Creatrix of the worlds. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehendeth not." This Supreme Word of Gold-White or Diamond-White Lustre gave birth to the seven

words or seven colours and thence were the worlds created and organised with one of these as the main and dominant note of each, with this Word acting through that note and delegate and supporting it from behind. The Supramental Ishwari Shakti has sent forth emanations out of Herself and these preside over the creation of each world of consciousness. But the secret purpose of The Divine Mother is to initiate in each of these worlds, starting from the lowest, this earth of ours, a new rhythm and a new creation by the manifestation of The Supreme Word directly and openly and not hidden or involved in one of its delegates or colours. So the Sadhaka of Integral Yoga whose aim in life is to will what the Divine wills has been praying ardently to the Word of the Silence :

“O Word concealed in the upper fire,
 Thou who hast lingered through centuries,
 Descend from thy rapt white desire,
 Plunging through gold eternities.

Into the gulfs of our nature leap,
 Voice of the spaces, call of the Light !
 Break the seals of Matter’s sleep,
 Break the trance of the unseen height.”

Sri Aurobindo’s sonnet, *The Word of the Silence*, records the experience of the Purna Yogi who listens in a tranquilly intense, wide ecstasy to this Supreme Word with his purified and transformed human mind in complete wakeful awareness.

II

The mind of the Yogi is in the ideal condition of receptivity of the Supramental vibration of consciousness :

A bare impersonal hush is now my mind,
 A world of sight clear and inimitable,
 A volume of silence by a Godhead signed,
 A greatness pure of thought, virgin of will.

After a long and apparently even interminable subjection to the noise of the different planes of consciousness below the Realm of Supramental Silence, the mind has attained a state of august, expectant and suddenly arrested stillness, hush. The King of Kings in all his regal splendour is going to make his habitation in its vast mansion; the Voice of the Infinity is about to sound in his heart and so the ardent, vibrant mood in which even the slightest trepidation has come to a dead stop, hush. This stillness is a commanding and imperative one issuing a mandate to every part and plane of being in the consciousness of the sadhaka to fall silent and prepare itself for the great Advent, hush ! The mental vessel has been emptied again and again every time an idea, image or even intuition, light or truth other than the Supramental found its way into it, for the aspiration of the Purna Yogi is to this Transcendent Truth exclusively and integrally. Even the power of the overmental word with its dynamism of creating a parallel world of Harmony here has been renounced, for only the Supramental can transform the world with an inconscient foundation and an overmind creation however splendid will ultimately be swallowed by the black dragon of the inconscient. So the mind is bare, absolutely empty, having nothing and being nothing and therefore ready to receive the All. Only the bare hush without the characteristic extroverting, introverting movements or the exclusive or the inclusive concentrations or the extensive or the intensive awareness. A simple global aspiring consciousness integrally open to the Word, without any trace of the individual ego or person, a 'bird seraphically free from the taint of personality', a universalised consciousness. The mind is not merely in that state but by constant indwelling and absorption in it, *bhāvanā*, it has become that state of consciousness. So the mind as a mentalising, thinking, feeling, imagining, willing and formulating organisation, is no longer there, but this bare impersonal hush. The natural result of this all-embracing absence of movement or clouding by the stuff of the mind or the ego in all the layers, is a global vision of all the planes of consciousness in their real truth free from any distortion, clear, with their essential nature and manifestations made vivid and plain and so completely authentic

and in tune with the Truth-consciousness that it cannot be imitated by any other faculty, inimitable. Nay, the mind does not so much see or is given the power of seeing but has itself faithfully mirrored and has even become the entire range of Truth-vision, a world of sight. And yet this multi-dimensional Truth-Vision does not perturb the mind for it is accompanied by the descent and stabilisation of masses of Peace of the highest ranges of the Spiritual Consciousness, the Supramental Peace. The Supreme Godhead, the Golden Purusha of the Supermind has left his signature on the mind which has therefore become a volume of silence, a wide expansive and huge column of tranquillity. The mental consciousness is no longer limited to the brain or the head but extends in width and height and is made infinite so that it could house the infinite. So it has become a greatness divesting itself of its characteristic smallness, dividing and delimiting and finitising consciousness. This wide consciousness is unsoiled, not adulterated by thought, nor is it defiled by will. Each thought is a formation by a limited consciousness in some plane of being by a process of concentration which excludes every other line of approach. It is again received by or projected into a mind with a similarity of mental substance and narrowness of the aperture of its consciousness. At best all thoughts are only half-truths and as such impurities to be eschewed by the mind opening to the Supramentalised Intuition. Every thought or sequence of thoughts is entertained by a will in the mind, a personal preference dictated and shaped by a desire. Man thinks what he wills, gets the ideas he wants and makes a pattern out of this process and calls it truth. The mind of the Yogi is free from these two kinds of intruders and aliens to Intuition—willings and thinkings. It has become intuitive, inspired and revelatory and therefore ready to hear the voice of the Silence. Bharati or Mahi has settled in it with her wideness. Ila has made it her home of Truth-vision, *dr̥ṣṭi*. The stage is set for the advent of Saraswati, the Goddess of the Inspired Word and Truth-audition, Sruti and the streams of inspiration flowing from the Truth-consciousness, the Awakener of the consciousness to right states of mind, *cetantī sumatīnām*.

III

So the barrier between Time in the Realms of Ignorance and Eternity in the Realms of Knowledge is crossed and the past condition of limited awareness is felt as a far distant experience now dropped for ever but recollected in tranquillity and perfect, serene detachment and evaluated at its real truth from this newly accomplished eminence of Supramental Truth-vision and Time-Vision :

Once on its pages Ignorance could write
 In a scribble of intellect the blind guess of Time
 And cast gleam-messages of ephemeral light,
 A food for souls that wander on Nature's rim.

The first, clear perception is that the mind is not a primary power of creating ideas but only a secondary constructing and formulating mechanism. Its thoughts are not original productions but feeble translations, faint echoes, vague projections from outside. The mind is only a receiving and refracting medium of a thousand powers of Ignorance surrounding, enveloping and sometimes even interpenetrating it and the preposterous claim of proprietary rights for thoughts entering into it is an illusion and nothing but egoistic arrogance. For the truth is that its chambers are but so many pages, passive receptacles whose only claim could be a tamasic mechanical acceptance of whatever is written on, by whichsoever ambitious and adventurous writer, without discrimination. Tamas calls for Tamas and the only writer who has been continuously writing with a monopoly of trade is Ignorance. The mind's subjection to the three modes of Ignorance, Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas, precarious balance, violent restlessness, and mechanical repetitiveness have made it possible for Ignorance to have the power to write on it. Ignorance could write because the mind would be written on. And the handwriting is a scribble, an imprecise, illegible piece of workmanship, of the poor craftsman of the intellect. The caverns of the mind are full of shadows of experience, cerebralised abstract notions of the

conceptual faculty, void and empty of any trace of the fire, flesh and blood of actual life, a disordered assemblage of layers upon layers of clumsy ideas, and theoretical speculations which are at several removes from experience. And what is the content of all this apparently endless, restless logomachy and toil of the writer ? The blind guess of Time ! The intellect is a dealer in possibilities and probabilities, not certitudes and its method of knowledge is by separative contact and inference which is to say, circling round and round the object and thinking about and about it without insight and so to accumulate what *may be*, never capable of arriving at what *is*, a blind guess. And it can never see the whole movement of experience in a single perspective. All life is a process but the intellect can never have a simultaneous vision of this process. It depends for its comprehension on Time, must observe many moments of time and add them together with its own curious logic and arbitrary connecting links. Also it is conditioned completely by considering objects as existing in Time and controlled by it. It leaves out of account the Infinite and Eternal which controls Time and shapes the objects towards a goal which remains a secret to the time-bound consciousness. Again the real truth of any phenomenon is in the Noumenon interpenetrating, enveloping and overarching it. And this unknown but omnipotent factor must remain unknowable by the intellect. So the substance of all its knowledge is a blind guess of Time ! This is indeed a terrible and intolerable state of murky darkness. But the gloom is relieved now and then by intimations from behind the veil though transmitted through and by the surface Ignorance. These are the intuitions from the subtle, subliminal physical, vital and mental planes of consciousness. These are cast or thrown off, flung or dropped prematurely in the white heat of intimate contact in frenzy between two points of consciousness in Ignorance, when the surface consciousness is arrested or rendered quiescent, unable to cope with its complications and therefore compelled to gaze in simple wonder free from all cerebral pyrotechnics. Born in and by a process of intimate contact of consciousness with consciousness they contain some truth and therefore form communications of wisdom, messages flashed with a

faint or moderate glow, gleam. All intuitions are charged with some form of light which is the external form of the inward truth contained in them. The more luminous the light, the more comprehending the truth it is the body of. And the more integral the truth, the more constant, steady and permanent is the Light it carries with. But the subliminal intuitions are ephemeral lights, not embodying the true truth or the whole truth, but pale reflections and sometimes even refractions by the unregenerate, recalcitrant shaping substance of the inferior planes of this triple world of the Ignorance or the Intermediate Zones. Very often indeed they act as the will-o'-the-wisp, promising a blazing guidance but leading into a quagmire of ever deeper Ignorance. Not being in full possession of the whole Truth they are found wanting in the complex web of circumstance and the maddening rush of events. They are short-lived, ephemeral lights, with a very limited range of applicability. But these half-truths of the intellect and half-lights of the intuition are the staple food of personalities who are contented or struggling prisoners of Nature. Those who live on the extreme surface of life satisfied with the daily routine of petty desires and gratifications, small thoughts limited to the sensible and the tangible, find in the speculations of the intellect or the ephemeral lights of intuition food for their curiosity and thirst for knowledge. They drift aimlessly, wander, caught in the outermost circumference, rim, of Nature's gigantic wheel, and so remain bemused with these.

IV

Such is the luminous and perfect understanding and appraisal by the purified mind open to the Supramental Light, of human mental life in the Ignorance. The Integral Yogi tries to live in the very spiritual centre of the wheel of Nature and even turn and overturn this wheel and give it a new orbit so that even the points in the outermost circumference of it become radiant with the Spiritual effulgence and hence the aspiration to hear the Supreme Word of the Silence in this very outer, surface mental consciousness. There is here no nostalgic turning to the past

or a contemptuous kicking against it and therefore increasing one's bondage to its tyranny, but an enlightened liberation which comes out of a complete and detached meditation and realisation of the real truth about Ignorance. When Ignorance is realised as Ignorance, the mind is indeed ready for the higher Supramental Knowledge. The mind of the Purna Yogi has been so far psychicised and spiritualised and lifted nearer and nearer the rhythm of the Supramental that it has *now* become plastic to receive the Vibration of the Supermind, the Word :

But now I listen to a greater Word

Born from the mute unseen omniscient Ray :

The Voice that only Silence' ear has heard

Leaps missioned from an eternal glory of Day.

The whole consciousness is massively open and pouring all itself in an unbroken continuity of concentration towards the Supreme Word, quietly absorbing and assimilating all the descending streams of Inspiration from above. Listening is a fusion of three powers of openness, concentrated upward turning and calm ingathering of descents. It is a spiral movement endlessly progressing higher and higher towards the Infinite. Openness leads to and is contained in upward concentration which in turn finds its fulfilment in assimilation of the descending Grace which again points to a higher opening, a more elevated upward turning and a more profound assimilation of the great descents, and so on and on, in an endless journey towards no end. The Word is the Voice of Infinity and therefore remains always greater than any manifested out of its bosom, pointing always to a beyond farther than the highest achieved altitude of consciousness, including at the same time all the essential truths of the manifestation and transcending these and so always greater. This is the Vast, Supreme Truth-Consciousness, Ritam, Satyam, Brihat, hymned by the Mystic Forefathers, the seers of the Veda. This Word has its origin in the 'mute unseen omniscient Ray'. It is the realm of Chit-Shakti or Aditi, the Divine Mother of Infinite Consciousness. Since it is the unmanifested, it remains the unseen,

unrevealed. As It has inexhaustible and infinite powers in its depths and heights it will always remain in its higher altitudes unseen, the manifested being but an infinitesimal portion of the Whole. Because all its powers are held in a fused identity without friction, each gliding into each and all embracing each, It is a region of eternal and absolute and unbroken Silence, mute. The only thing which can be posited about it is that It being the origin of all and creator of all, knows all, is omniscient and must of its very nature be Light, a Ray, a manifesting radiation of Light. The Region itself must be a conglomeration of several such Rays, Rasmi Vyuha, Tejo Samooaha, inundating and interpenetrating all, always and everywhere and so an eternal glory of Day, Light without shadow—*rūpam kalyānatamam*. This Voice of the Silence, heard only in a consciousness suffused with the Supramental Peace and immobility, in the divine appointed moment arises commissioned by the Grace and with the mission of ushering in the new creation surprises the Sadhaka with its sudden, swift and instantaneous descent into his mind direct from the heights, without the need to pass through the intermediate planes from overmind to the Higher Thinking Mind and hence leaps. The Word itself with all its plenitude of perfection unconditioned or translated by its delegates makes the mind Its mansion. The Divine Mother with Her Truth-Consciousness descends even into the waking surface physical mind.

V

So the word is made flesh and the flesh partakes of the glory of the Word. The Voice of Infinity is heard in the finite consciousness. *Parā vāk vaikarī bhūta*. The three Goddesses Bhairati, Ila and Saraswati have established the divine felicity and plenitude in the human consciousness, Bhadram, Mayas, Swasti, rayah.

All turns from a wideness and unbroken peace
To a tumult of joy in a sea of wide release,

The consciousness of the Yogi is now supramentalised and has become vast as the sea, free and liberated in its movements. The heart of this sea is a basic wideness and sustained peace which is never ruffled by its most dynamic movements. It supports and originates all contacts of consciousness which give always the same intense, complex, rich ecstasy of the Divine Delight of Existence, Ananda, a tumult of Joy, Freedom, Largeness and Peace culminating in Ananda—that is the new rhythm of this Life Divine. All is seen and realised as parcel and portion of the ocean of the Infinite Divine Consciousness. Every contact is an embrace of union of the divine in the subject with the divine in the object and all creation is vibrant in its depths with this Ananda and evolution is the endeavour to manifest this Delight in all levels and conditions. This supramental time-vision gives the wide release to the consciousness from the weary weight of this once unintelligible world of strife and noise. 'All shall be well and all manner of thing shall be well by the purification of the motive in the ground of our beseeching.' In all, the Yogi sees the Divine consciousness shaping them towards the grand consummation of a Divine Orchestration and Symphony. In his individual consciousness too the same Divine Mother is at work making the faculties plastic to each other, freely seeking and realising their goal, the mind manifesting the Truth, the vital the Power, the physical the Beauty and the psychic the Love and all the Divine Ananda. Within and without, all turns to a tumult of joy of many-sided richness and intensity of ecstasy springing from an ocean heart of wideness, freedom and peace, by the presence and power of The Word of the Silence, Anahata Nada.

M. V. SEETARAMAN

REVIEWS

The Integral Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo : A Commemorative Symposium edited by *Haridas Chaudhuri and Frederic Spiegelberg*. Publishers : George Allen & Unwin Ltd., Price 42s. net.

The editors deserve our hearty congratulations for presenting to the reading public interested in the study of philosophy, this fine Commemorative Symposium dealing with some aspects of the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo. They very rightly think that the time is "ripe for the message of Sri Aurobindo to be increasingly known to the wider public in different parts of the world." This Symposium consisting of some bright and thought-provoking articles from eminent scholars of the East and West working in the domain of metaphysical speculations, is a proof of the fact that Sri Aurobindo's message has touched and penetrated the level of present-day metaphysical thinking and is sure to reach other levels of our conscious existence to give them the right orientation for their higher fulfilment.

The Symposium entitled 'The Integral Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo' is edited by Dr. Haridas Chaudhuri and Dr. Spiegelberg both of whom are well-known as dynamic and creative thinkers equipped with right capacity and talents for presenting the thought currents of the East and the West in their proper perspective in which lie their meeting ground and the seed of fruitful harmonisation of the apparently divergent ways of approach to Truth and their fulfilment in life. Dr. Chaudhuri is the President of the Cultural Integration Fellowship, and Chairman of the Department of South Asia at the American Academy of Asian Studies, San Francisco. Dr. Spiegelberg is Professor of

Asiatic and Slavic Studies at Stanford University, Northern California. The two friends along with other contributors, in all thirty eminent scholars, have opened discussions of various lines of the huge thought-structure of the Integral Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo and its culmination in his Integral Yoga, the marvellous path by treading which one can hope to realise something of his noble teaching.

These contributions cover a wide field of study and are arranged into five parts : Philosophy, Epistemology and Psychology, Yoga and Ethics, Literature and Miscellaneous. These terms except one and the method of division are all taken from the Western System of Thought and through the medium of them the analytical mind of the modern age can profitably make an initial start for developing a synthetic grasp, later on, of the Integral Truth that is Sri Aurobindo.

Right at the beginning we have under Philosophy, Part One, "The Integral Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo" from the powerful pen of Dr. Haridas Chaudhuri. He gives the name of Integral Non-dualism to the Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo as in it we find a mystic overmental current which affirms all through a process of supramental integration. All non-dualistic theories both in the East and the West can thus be assimilated in the boundless framework of this non-dualism and even their conflicts can find their happy ending in "the undivided wholeness and fundamental oneness" of the supramental Absolute which embraces all absolutes hitherto conceived or visualised. In the Eastern thought, we have the Vedantic absolutes of Brahman as pure existence, or Brahman as Bliss or pure delight, Brahman as Iswara the Omnipotent and Omniscient and all-creative Dynamic Reality. And beyond all these absolutes we have the unmanifest Indeterminable, indefinable 'That !' Samkhya gives an absolute of Purusha Consciousness, self-existent, uncreative and immobile standing aloof as witness of the eternal movements of Prakriti. Buddhism gives the Infinite Nihil as the last term in our thought, and there are other finalities arrived at by various schools of Philosophy prevalent in India. Similarly in the West there are different types of non-dualism such as Naturalism,

Pantheism, Voluntarism, Vitalism and absolute Idealism etc. In this Western wing of thought we find the mind yet struggling within the charmed circle of mentation and all absolutes propounded by the Western thinkers are at best bright speculations and results of thought movements within the sphere of thought itself. In the Eastern wing alone we find a real effort to exceed the realm of mind and enter into the vaster Kingdoms of spirit and to bring down some spiritual absolutes for the comprehension of the mind. Sri Aurobindo's Non-dualism which visualises the Absolute of absolutes discovers the right value of all trends of thought in the East as well as in the West. The naturalistic absolutes of Space-Time continuum or of physical energy, or subtle physical substance whose eastern counterpart is illustrated in the concept of Pradhana of Samkhya philosophy, the vitalistic absolute of *Elan vital* and its Indian counterpart of *Prana* as *Brahman*, the voluntaristic absolute with Will as the first principle of creative movement with its Indian counterpart of *Mahashakti* as the Mother of the Universe and Idealistic absolute of Plato and Hegel and other Idealists with their spiritual counterparts in Vedanta which teaches Infinite *Jnanam* as *Brahman*, all these absolutes and many more receive their inner and intimate value and significance in the *Purna-advaita* of Sri Aurobindo. Dr. Chaudhuri has thus laid down a broad philosophical framework of the symposium in his article and the other contributors have very successfully filled up the picture by their psychological, epistemological and literary touches and even with spiritual flashes to complete the well-thoughtout programme of presenting some aspects of the thought-structure of Sri Aurobindo's writings.

There is however a serious misrepresentation in one of the articles to which, it is felt, the attention of the editors and the reading public should be drawn. Here is an extract from 'The Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo' as given on p. 208 of the symposium. After giving some distinctive points of the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo, the writer goes on to say—"In this 'integration' lies its strong and weak points. Its strong points have been emphasised above; the main weakness is a sort of eclecticism

that pervades especially the techniques of integral yoga. Rejecting as one-sided the techniques of other Yogas, and trying to give its own system of techniques, the Purna Yoga hardly gives any of its own. It simply puts together side by side several techniques taken from other Yogas. Neither its prescriptions of self-opening and self-surrender; nor of cooperation with the Cosmic power; nor psychicization and spiritualisation; nor calming and stilling the bodily mind; nor the triple path are new. They all are given and developed in other Yogas and in the techniques of various 'mystic ways' outside of India. For these reasons the Integral Yoga hardly contributes much that is original to this field."

In the above quotation we have the evidence, we are sorry to say, of a miserable case of self-complacent ignorance. To talk of Yoga and its manifold techniques without ever following it in the right spirit may be scholar-like but surely not Yogi-like. The writer says in the beginning that the integral Yoga is not a true integration but is "a sort of eclecticism" and that there is hardly anything original in it so far as technique is concerned; and that "it simply puts together, side by side several techniques taken from other Yogas." This is a gross misrepresentation due to incapacity to understand the teaching of Sri Aurobindo which opens inwardly to the psychological being of the awakened soul, a world of subtle and subjective lines of Yoga techniques. The writer fails to find any fixed, objective and outward system of techniques usually given in other systems of Yoga. It is a correct observation and we have nothing to take any exception to this. But when he makes this a ground for condemning Integral Yoga, we must say that his reaction is hasty and misleading. The techniques of the various types of Yoga are certain routine exercises either of the physical parts or of the parts of the vital being or of some elements of the mental being. They are useful at the base of the hill of Yoga but when we ascend the hill these rigid techniques may not continue and may be pushed aside yielding room to subtler processes and more subjective procedures. At a later stage of progress the individual effort has got to be replaced by the higher Will working in the Sadhaka. Here starts

a reversal of Consciousness and at the Summit of the Hill, the pure technique of surrender to the Divine is offered to the Sadhaka as the only way. Integral Yoga can begin even at the bottom with some measure of this technique of reversal of Consciousness through elimination of ego and desire and transformation of our mental, vital and physical nature into their divine counterparts. By the very nature of the case Integral Yoga cannot prescribe any fixed technique or combine the already existing techniques of other Yogas. The process of synthesis here involves a high degree of sublimation of the laborious methods current in other Yogas ; and this sublimation can result only by more and more integration through transcendence until the right principle and the subtle power behind all yogic techniques can come to the forefront and seize the Sadhaka and carry on the Sadhana of the Sadhaka of the Integral Yoga. The Master has clearly pointed out in *The Synthesis of Yoga* that "The synthesis we propose cannot, then, be arrived at either by combination in mass or by successive practice (of the different kinds of Yoga). It must therefore be effected by neglecting the forms and out-sides of the yogic disciplines and seizing rather on some central principle common to all which will include and utilise in the right place and proportion their particular principles, and on some central dynamic force which is the common secret of their divergent methods and capable therefore of organising a natural selection and combination of their varied energies and different utilities". (*The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 46). If after this one still holds the view that Integral Yoga with its technique is a sort of eclecticism then the conclusion is irresistible that the writer's eye of Yoga is blind or yet undeveloped.

In this limited space it is not possible to treat with a full elaborate discussion, the question raised by the writer regarding whether Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo is "a sort of eclecticism" having nothing new to contribute or otherwise. Suffice it to point out that the writer has sadly missed the central teaching of Sri Aurobindo.

The Master says in another place that "The method we have to pursue, then, is to put our whole conscious being into relation

and contact with the Divine and to call Him in to transform our entire being into His, so that in a sense God Himself, the real Person in us, becomes the Sadhaka of the Sadhana as well as the Master of the Yoga by whom the lower personality is used as the centre of a divine transfiguration and the instrument of its own perfection"—(*The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 50). Once this central method begins its work in the Sadhaka, any of the set techniques of the different types of Yoga may be utilised if needed, by the inner Guide, the Divine in the individual or they may be altogether discarded. It depends on the Will of the Inner Guide. There is another point to which our attention also needs be drawn. The writer did not stop merely with delineating the so-called drawbacks of the integral Yoga but he adds a sermon and expresses a pious wish also. Here is what he says towards the end of his criticism—"His (meaning Sri Aurobindo) attempts to put together various techniques of spiritualisation and divinization of man and humanity also make an important contribution to the field of the techniques....If Sri Aurobindo only partly succeeded in this task, this partial success is already of some importance. The whole task is so gigantic that no single man can achieve it in its full totality. It is upto subsequent intellectuals and moral seers (!) to bring it nearer to its full fruition". What the writer means by "partial success" or "its full totality" in the above quotation or by the expression "intellectual and moral seers", we need not enquire. But I am inclined to cry out in the Biblical way "Lord, forgive him for he does not know what he is saying !"

If it appears that I am finding fault with what could be easily overpassed, I must at the same time hasten to tell the readers as I have already done, that barring this article or a part of it, all the rest are inspiring and thought stimulating and the eminent contributors deserve our hearty congratulations for this intellectual feast. The study of Sri Aurobindo would remain blank and arid if our heart failed to partake of it. Indeed a spontaneous feeling of adoration for the great teacher, is the gift of such a study, that drops from invisible heights, almost uncalled for.

Let us then conclude this short review with the words of Swami Sivananda towards the end of his contribution. "...India

is proud of Sri Aurobindo and the phenomenon of his contributions; but the profit accruing for the gifts of Sri Aurobindo is not only its own, it is of all the world ! May the spirit of Sri Aurobindo shower its choicest blessings upon all mankind."

NARENDRA NATH DAS GUPTA

II

Krishnollasa. By *P. R. Subrahmanya Sastri*, Pub., S. Subrahmanyam, Madras, pp. 134, Price, Rs. 5/-

Devotional literature forms a large part in the bulk of literary expressions in this land. The story of Lord Krishna has been told and retold in countless ways. Yet it will never fail to attract notice and a new book on the same theme will be watched with pleasurable anticipation. The book under review amply justifies such anticipation.

The story is told in the pattern of a Champû-kāvya (prose and verse mixed), in eight chapters (Ullases), describing the childhood, adolescence, youth, manhood, marriage, maturity and the Divine aspect of Lord Krishna.

The prose style varies from one of simple lucidity in the purely narrative portions to that of highly alliterative assonance and resonance of long compound words in the manner of a Bâna. The ornate style is used generally to describe unusual happenings or dramatic episodes, such as the vision of the Universe, in the child's mouth, by Yasoda or events leading to the marriage with Rukmini. A judicious admixture of two styles, avoiding on the one hand a flat monotone and, on the other, a pomposity, has made the book eminently readable and attractive.

The total number of verses is over three hundred and fifty, which, in a book of less than one hundred and fifty pages, would warrant its classification as a book of poetry mostly. More than hundred different metres have been pressed into service. The

wide range in the choice of metres (even a classical work like *Sisupâla-vadha* uses less than half this variety) is a convincing testimony to the author's mastery over technique. It indicates, perhaps, an over-fondness for variety. Our enjoyment of metrical compositions, particularly in the Sanskrit language, like our enjoyment of Ragas in classical music, depends to a fair extent on a previous acquaintance with the metre or Raga, awaking a refrain of familiar notes and chords. Some of the verses, using metres rarely met with, have not had this appeal.

A very useful service has been rendered by the inclusion, as an appendix, of a complete alphabetical list of the Slokas, the metres used and gana-arrangement of the metres. A separate section on Sanskrit Prosody has been added in the Introduction, where a claim is made that the book may very well serve as a Text illustrating metres in the study of Prosody. This claim is justified.

The author closely follows the story as given in the tenth Skanda of *Bhagavat-puranam*, but, in the manner of recounting it lies the great merit and charm of the book. No attempt has been made to hold up an ideal standard of conduct, or justify a tradition, or explain a ritual or expound a philosophy or prescribe a spiritual path. The telling of the story is what counts with the author and as one exploit follows another in quick succession, the insatiable 'child' in us awakes and holds his breath to hear more. And, like a background music in a cinema, adorations of the Lord, expressed in verses of rare beauty and interspersed throughout the narration, build up unobtrusively, as it were, a picture, in the mind, of the Divine Being, whose Glory is being sung. As a help to those, who intend to take up, at a later stage, the study of *Bhagavatam* in original, '*Kṛṣṇollâsaḥ*' has few rivals.

It is a matter of regret that the author, Sri P.R. Subrahmanya Sastri did not live to see the publication. Long after his retirement from the Educational Department, Mysore, while visiting a shrine of Krishna at the temple in Guruvayur, the inspiration to write this book came to him. This was in 1935. He completed the book in 1947 after several revisions.

The author's son, Sri S. Subrahmanyam, an erudite Sankrit scholar himself, has, as rightly remarked by Dr. V. Raghavan in

the Preface, demonstrated his great devotion to his father as well as to the cause of Sanskrit literature in publishing the book in its present form. Copious information and educative material have been furnished by him in the Introduction. The printing and general get-up are excellent. In company with Dr. Raghavan, we look forward to the publications of other Kavyas from the manuscripts left by the learned author.

I. K. Roy



*Faithfulness is the sure basis
of success.*

13.4.59



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